

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

Milica Vučković

**Zasebno, popularno in politično na družbenih medijih: analiza
spletnega komuniciranja Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in
Iva Josipovića**

**Private, Popular and Political on Social Media: Analysis of On-
line Communication of
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Doktorska disertacija

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Podpis avtorja/-ice:

Zasebno, popularno in politično na družbenih omrežjih: analiza spletne komunikacije

Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića

Čeprav fenomen personalizacije politike, znanstvenike in strokovnjake zaposluje že desetletja in se kaže kot eden od najpomembnejših trendov v sodobni demokratični politiki (Rahat in Kenig, 2018, str. 1), še vedno ne obstaja enotna definicija tega pojava. Fenomen t. i. »politike osebnosti« je poskušalo definirati več avtorjev (Grbeša, 2010; Holtz-Bacha, 2004; Langer, 2010, 2011; Karvonen, 2010; Van Zoonen, 2004), kompleksnost njihovih ugotovitev pa je privedla do vrste različnih konceptov in definicij. Večina avtorjev prepoznava fenomen politike osebnosti skozi tri dimenzije: personalizacijo politične moči, personalizacijo vedenja volivcev in personalizacijo političnega komuniciranja. Tretja dimenzija, ki bo v središču te disertacije, je poznana tudi kot medijska personalizacija. O tej se govori v kontekstu spreminjajočega medijskega okolja in procesov mediatizacije, ki so poleg drugih družbenih procesov, kot so individualizacija, modernizacija in spremembe političnih sistemov, videni kot vzroki in gonila personalizacije. Bolj specifična vloga družbenih medijev pa je v tukajšnji študiji opredeljena v relaciji do fenomena personalizacije s predpostavko, da poleg drugih oblik komuniciranja družbeni mediji preoblikujejo tudi strateško komuniciranje političnih strank in individualnih političnih akterjev. Poseben poudarek je namenjen fenomenu privatizacije in popularizacije politike, podrobneje pa so razdelani tudi nekateri nedavni trendi, ki se pojavljajo v spletnem političnem komuniciranju, kot so »de-profesionalizacija«, »amaterizem« in problem »avtentičnosti«.

Medijska personalizacija je bila običajno proučevana predvsem v kontekstu mainstream medijev, ki so označeni kot nenadzorovana medijska okolja, v tej raziskavi pa nas zanima, kako se personalizacija izvaja kot komunikacijska strategija v nadzorovanih medijskih okoljih, tj. na družbenih omrežjih. Z drugimi besedami: namen te disertacije je bil raziskati nove oblike personalizacije, ki se pojavljajo v kontekstu nadzorovanega medijskega okolja »družbenih medijev«, z osredotočanjem na vsebine, objavljene na straneh na omrežju Facebook. Raziskava vzame pod drobnogled personalizacijo politične komunikacije na izbranem družbenem omrežju v treh zelo različnih sodobnih demokracijah z drugačnimi tipi političnih sistemov. Upoštevajoč razlike med ustavnimi določbami, obstoječimi oblikami vladanja in praksami demokratičnega upravljanja je delo združilo, primerjalo in analiziralo Facebook komunikacijo predsednika v predsedniškem režimu (ZDA), premiera v parlamentarnem režimu (Velika Britanija) in predsednika v parlamentarnem režimu (Hrvaška). Preko teh treh primerov smo personalizacijo opazovali in interpretirali na dveh različnih ravneh, ki izhajata iz predhodno določenih ciljev raziskave: 1. kot del politične komunikacijske strategije političnih akterjev; in 2. kot spodbudo oz stimulacijo za vključevanje državljanov v politično komunikacijo.

Za proučevanje Facebook objav Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića smo uporabili analizo vsebine. Izbrana enota analize je bila objava posameznega politika na izbrani strani omrežja Facebook. Analiza je upoštevala značilnosti in stopnjo personalizacije, objave pa so bile vsebinsko kategorizirane kot bolj zasebne in popularne ali bolj politične. Z ozirom na to, da je personalizacija kot komunikacijska strategija bolj pogosta med volilnimi kampanjami, je pričujoča študija poskušala empirično in teoretsko proučiti tako obdobja med kampanjami, kot tudi obdobja med enimi in drugimi volitvami. Stopnja in narava interakcij državljanov je bila ocenjena na podlagi pregleda njihovih odzivov v obliki všečkov, komentarjev in delitev.

Kljub temu, da so kakršnekoli generalizacije onkraj obsega pričujoče študije, le-ta potrjuje predhodne ugotovitve, da je politična komunikacija na omrežju Facebook personalizirana. To se je primarno manifestiralo skozi vidnost proučevanih politikov na fotografijah, ki so bile objavljene na njihovih straneh na omrežju Facebook. Na drugi strani pa je bila personalizacija precej manj prisotna v njihovih preostalih objavah. Privatizacijo sem preverjala še posebej skozi prisotnost zasebnega ali družinskega življenja in družinskih članov v objavljenih fotografijah. Prav tako je bila popularizacija, proučevana kot prisotnost popularne kulture in slavnih osebnosti v obravnavanih objavah, v Obamovi, Cameronovi in Josipovićevi komunikaciji na Facebooku redkokdaj uporabljena. Te ugotovitve kažejo na razpon vsaj treh stopenj privatizacije v spletnem komuniciranju politikov – nizko, srednjo in visoko.

Nizka stopnja privatizacije se nanaša na formalno vključitev družinskih članov v politično prizorišče. Ta stopnja privatizacije je bila ugotovljena v vseh treh proučevanih primerih. O srednji stopnji privatizacije govorimo takrat, ko politični akterji uporabljajo reference na svoje zasebno življenje (hobije, otroštvo, izobrazbo, navade) ali popularno kulturo. Te ravni se je najbolj posluževal Ivo Josipović, medtem ko je opisano strategijo najmanj uporabljal Cameron. Tretja raven privatizacije se nanaša na dogodke, ko politiki omenijo družinske člane v neformalnem kontekstu, kadar delijo intimne družinske trenutke, so do družinskih članov taktilni (se objemajo, držijo za roke, poljubljajo) in izrazito kažejo čustva. Ta tip privatizacije je bil viden predvsem v Obamovem primeru, ob redkih priložnostih pa tudi na strani Davida Camerona, na primer ko je poljubil ženo Samantha in nosil njuno hčer. Nekdanji hrvaški predsednik Josipović te stopnje privatizacije ni uporabil nikoli.

Pregled aktivne odzivnosti državljanov na Obamovo, Cameronovo in Josipovićevo Facebook stran vključuje število všečkov, komentarjev in objav za vsako analizirano objavo. Uporaba multivariatne regresijske analize je pokazala, katere tehnike in vsebine objav so imele pozitiven vpliv na število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev, ter, obratno, katere tehnike so imele negativen vpliv. Po pričakovanjih so državljani raje všečkali, delili in komentirali privatizirane in emocionalne objave. Zanimiva ugotovitev analize se nanaša na prisotnost običajnih ljudi v objavah, kar je pogosto uporabljena tehnika za približevanje politikov državljanom. Čeprav je Facebook idealna platforma za »povezovanje ljudi«, je študija ugotovila, da je imela v vseh treh primerih prisotnost običajnih ljudi v objavah negativen vpliv na število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev.

Medtem ko študija torej pritrjuje sodobnemu akademskemu konsenzu, da so družbeni mediji nepovratno spremenili politično komuniciranje, poskuša osvetliti dve drugi povezani predpostavki: to, da družbeni mediji prispevajo k personalizaciji politike in da lahko namigi na zasebno in popularno v Facebook objavah spodbujajo državljane k vključevanju v politiko in politične procese. Študija je s kombiniranjem teoretskih, opisnih in empiričnih orodij potrdila prvo in delno tudi drugo predpostavko, kar nakazuje, da imajo lahko namigi na zasebno pozitivne učinke na vključenost državljanov. Predpostavka, da bodo v komunikaciji politikov na Facebooku namigi na popularno pogosto uporabljeni in da bodo ti privabili visoko število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev, pa vendarle ni bila potrjena. Če povzamemo, disertacija, ki gradi na ideji, da so nove komunikacijske platforme omogočile nove oblike političnega predstavljanja in samopredstavljanja, pokaže, da se fenomen personalizacije ne kaže samo na Facebooku, temveč ga oblikujeta tudi interaktivna logika in javna dostopnost te platforme. Rezultati raziskave podpirajo predpostavko, da lahko emocionalni pozivi ter nanašanje na zasebno in družinsko življenje pritegnejo večjo pozornost državljanov, ki je izražena v številu všečkov, komentarjev in delitev, kar odpira nova in zanimiva vprašanja o naravi sodobnega političnega procesa.

Ključne besede: Barack Obama, Ivo Josipović, David Cameron, emocionalizacija, Facebook, mediatizacija, spletno vključevanje, personalizacija politike, privatizacija politične osebnosti, popularizacija politike, družbena omrežja.

Private, popular and political on social media: analysis of on-line communication of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović

Although the phenomenon of personalisation of politics preoccupies the attention of scientists and experts already for decades and is found to be one of the most prominent developments in contemporary democratic politics (Rahat and Kenig, 2018, p. 1), there is still no single definition of the phenomenon. Numerous authors (Grbeša, 2010; Holtz-Bacha, 2004; Langer, 2010, 2011; Karvonen, 2010; Van Zoonen 2004) have tried to define the phenomenon of personality politics and the complexity of their findings resulted in many different concepts and definitions. Most of them recognise three dimensions of personality politics: personalisation of political power, personalisation of voters' behaviour and personalisation of political communication. The last dimension, which will be in the focus of this thesis, is also known as media personalisation. Media personalisation is discussed in the context of changing media environment and process of mediatisation, which are seen as causes and drivers of personalisation, alongside with other processes in the society such as individualisation, modernisation and changes in political systems. The specific role of social media is debated in relation to the phenomenon of personalisation because it is assumed that along with other forms of new media, social media are reshaping the strategic communication of political parties and individual political actors. Specific attention is given to the phenomenon of the privatisation and popularisation of politics. Also, some recent trends that occur in online political communication such as "de-professionalisation", "amateurism" and "authenticity" are elaborated.

Media personalisation has been mainly studied in the context of mainstream media which constitute uncontrolled media environment, while in this research it is investigated how personalisation is exercised as a communication strategy in a controlled media environment, i.e. on social media. In other words, the intention of this study is to investigate new forms of personalisation that emerge in the context of controlled media environment i.e. on "social media", focusing on the material from Facebook fan pages. This research examines the personalisation of political communication on social media in three different contemporary democracies, with different types of the political system. Bearing in mind the differences in constitutional provisions, in the existing polity, and in practices of democratic governance, the work is bringing together, comparing, and jointly analysing, the Facebook communication of a president in a presidential regime (the United States), of a prime minister in a parliamentary regime (the United Kingdom), and of a president in a parliamentary regime (Croatia). Across these three cases, the personalisation is observed and interpreted on two different levels, that stem from the underlying goals of the research: 1. as a part of the political communication strategy of political actors, 2. as an incentive/stimulus for citizens' engagement.

Content analysis is used to analyse Facebook posts of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. The unit of analysis was set at the level of Facebook post posted on selected pages. The analysis accounts for the character and the intensity of personalisation, categorising posts as more narrowly private and popular or more narrowly political in content. Bearing in mind that personalisation as a communication strategy is more usual during election campaigns, this study tried to empirically and theoretically tackle the strategy in the long term. The amount of citizens' interaction is assessed by looking at the numbers of likes, comments and shares.

Although any kind of generalisation is beyond the scope of this study, it can be said that the study confirmed previous findings that political communication on Facebook is personalised. Personalisation was primarily manifested through the visibility of examined politicians in photos posted on their Facebook fan pages. On the other hand, privatisation was much less present in their Facebook communication. Privatisation was tested through references to private or family life specifically and through the presence of family members in posted photos. Also, popularisation, tested through references to popular culture and the presence of celebrities in examined posts, was rarely used in Facebook communication of Obama, Cameron and Josipović. The findings suggest that there were three main levels of privatisation – low, medium and high.

The low level of privatisation refers to the formal appearance of family members in a political setting. This level of privatisation was found in all three examined cases. A medium level of privatisation occurs when political actors use references to their private life (hobbies, childhood, education, habits) or popular culture. Ivo Josipović resorted to this level of privatisation the most. The third level of privatisation occurs when politicians mention a family member in an informal context, when they share intimate moments with their family, show physical intimacy towards family members (hugging, holding hands, kissing), and when they excessively demonstrate feelings. This type of privatisation was registered mainly in Obama's case, and on very few occasions on David Cameron's page, such as when he kissed his wife Samantha and carried his daughter. Former Croatian president Josipović never used this level of privatisation.

Examination of citizens' engagement on Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook fan pages included numbers of likes, comments and posts for each analysed post. Using OLS regression analysis, it was revealed which techniques and what content in the post had a positive effect on numbers of likes, comments and shares and conversely, which techniques had a negative effect. Expectedly, it was revealed that citizens prefer liking, sharing, and commenting on privatised and emotionalised posts. An interesting finding relates to the presence of ordinary people in the posts, a common technique used to bring politicians closer to citizens. While Facebook is an ideal platform to 'connect with people', the study revealed that the appearance of ordinary people in the posts had a negative effect on the number of likes, comments and shares in all three cases.

While acknowledging the recent scholarly consensus that social media have irreversibly changed political communication, this study shed light on two related assumptions: the assumption that social media contribute to the personalisation of politics, and that private and popular cues communicated in Facebook posts may work to encourage citizens to engage with politicians and political processes per se. By combining theoretical, descriptive and empirical tools, this study has confirmed the first assumption and partially the second assumption which suggests that private cues have a positive effect on users' engagement. The assumption that popular cues will be often used in politicians' Facebook communication and that they will work to attract high numbers of likes, comments and shares, was not confirmed. To sum up, building on the idea that new communication platforms have enabled new forms of presentation and self-presentation, this dissertation revealed that the phenomenon of personalisation is not only manifested on Facebook but is also shaped by the interactive logic and public availability of this platform. The results of the research support the idea that emotional appeals and references to private and family life might draw greater attention of citizens, as expressed in the number of likes, comments and shares, opening new and interesting questions about the nature of the contemporary political processes.

Keywords: Barack Obama, Ivo Josipović, David Cameron, emotionalization, Facebook, mediatisation, online engagement, personalisation of politics, privatisation of political persona, popularisation of politics, social media.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conceptualising the problem and the aim of the dissertation

Since Barack Obama's Presidential campaign in 2008, a lot has changed in the ways that politics is presented to citizens. That change signified the appearance and increasing use of new communication channels and platforms. Although television was still the primary source of political information for most citizens, the internet and social media started to become more and more important in informing the populace about politics. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, have become platforms with millions and millions of users, with unbelievable potential and a reach that the traditional mass media could only wish for. Politicians realised the potential of these platforms and started using them in their communication. Social media became campaign platforms for daily communication, for interaction, for important announcements, for getting the news. For instance, Barack Obama announced his re-election bid, with a YouTube video and a tweet, on April 4th, 2011 (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015). Four years later, on April 12th, 2015, Hillary Clinton announced her presidential candidacy with a tweet and a YouTube video (Enli, 2017). Justin Trudeau started his way to the Prime Ministerial position, with the announcement of his candidacy for the federal Liberal leadership, in a YouTube video that was posted on his website on October 2nd, 2012 (CTVSnews, 2012, October 2). On March 19th, 2013, Pope Francis opened his Twitter account. The most-watched live Facebook video in 2018 was the Brazilian President, Jair Bolsonaro's live broadcast, which was seen by more than eight million people. It featured Bolsonaro "from his hospital bed, where he was recovering from an assassination attempt during the election campaign in September 2018" (Twiplomacy, 2019, April 9). In 2019, Donald Trump reached 67 million followers through his Twitter account. In 2019, 94% of the 193 UN member states had an official presence on Facebook (ibid).

These numbers are related to the expansion of social media and their influence in the last decade, which have led to changes in the way politics is presented. However, social media have not been the trigger for these changes. Social media amplified and reinforced the changes that originally came with the advent of television, increased media competition, and the increased complexity of politics (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 137). The process of "moving the media towards the centre of the social process" is known as 'mediatisation' (Blumler & Kavanagh 1999, p. 211). At the core of the mediatisation thesis is the assumption that politics has succumbed to the media logic which became the defining factor in covering politics. Politics is

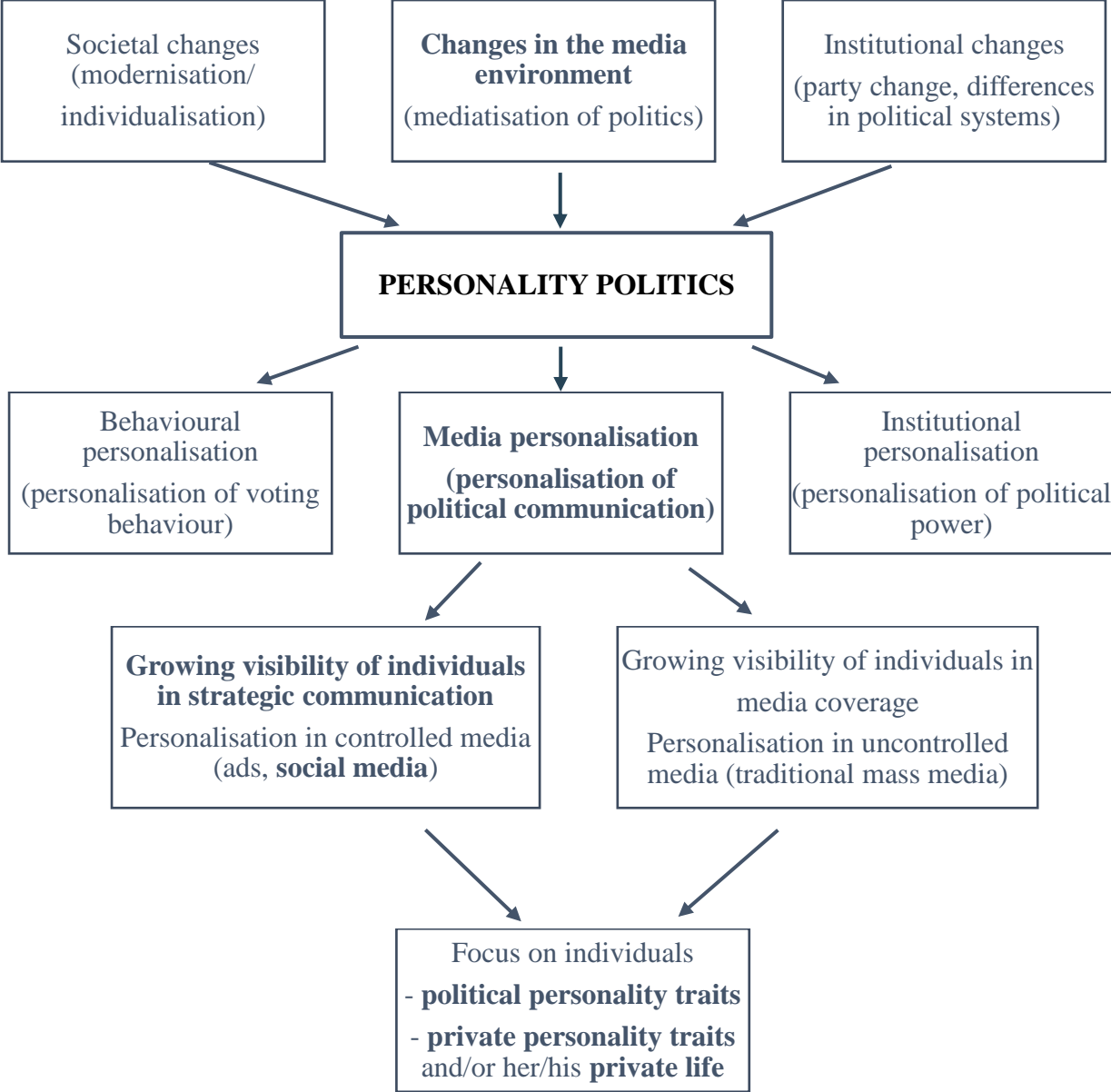
now covered through the use of the most attractive TV formats, like debates or talk shows, and by using storytelling techniques which are favoured by the media. Some of these techniques are conflict, drama, negativity, emotionalization, and personalisation (Strömbäck, 2008). More precisely, personalisation is one of the most often mentioned consequences of the process of the mediatisation of politics. Many authors find that we are witnessing a general trend towards political personalisation (Rahat & Kenig, 2018).

However, changes in the media environment have not been the only factor fostering personalisation. Other societal changes, like the modernisation of society, individualisation, changes in political systems, party politics and electoral systems, have also had an important role in the growing importance of individual politicians at the expense of collectives (Holtz-Bacha, Langer & Merkle, 2014; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). Besides media personalisation, authors recognise behavioural personalisation (Rahat & Kenig, 2018), which is also sometimes referred to as the personalisation of voting behaviour or electoral choice (Grbeša, 2008), and institutional personalisation (Rahat & Kenig, 2018), or the personalisation of political power (Grbeša, 2008). For the causes and dimensions of personality politics, see Figure 1.1. The focus, in this study, will be on media personalisation, also known as the personalisation of political communication (*ibid*).

It involves growing visibility of individual politicians in media reports, and the growing visibility of individual politicians in the strategic communication of parties (Grbeša, 2008). Some authors, in this context, make a distinction between media personalisation in controlled media versus uncontrolled media (Rahat & Kenig, 2018). In this context, personalisation in controlled media can be associated with personalisation of strategic communication, which is mainly exercised in campaign ads and on social media. Personalisation in uncontrolled media can be associated with the personalisation of news coverage in traditional media (newspapers, TV and radio). The growing visibility of politicians in media coverage and strategic communication is reflected not only in candidate-centered reports and campaigns but also in a greater presence of their personality traits (political and private) and their private life. A phenomenon that is related to the increasing interest in the private traits of politicians, and in their private lives, is known as the privatisation of politics, or the politicisation of the private persona (Langer, 2007). In this context, Holtz-Bacha differentiates four goals of privatisation: humanisation, emotionalization, simplification and distraction and striving for celebrity status

(2004). Related to this final goal is the concept of popularisation of politics and celebrity politics (Street, 2004; Wheeler, 2013).

Figure 1. 1: Causes and dimensions of personality politics



Source: Adapted from Grbeša (2008) and Rahat and Kenig (2018).

All these trends have been thoroughly studied in the last two decades, mainly in the context of uncontrolled media (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006; Karvonen, 2009; Langer, 2007; McAllister, 2007; Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Van Zoonen, 2006; Wattenberg, 1991). Bearing in mind that the personalisation of politics “is said to be reinforced by the media which have developed their own ‘media logic’ for covering politics in general, and political campaigns

in particular” (Swanson & Mancini, 1996, p. 251), and that personalisation is often seen as one of the “news values pursued by the mass media in their competition for a mass audience, just as negativity, conflict and drama” (Kriesi, 2011, p. 826), it is important to test the personalisation thesis in a different, controlled (Rahat & Kenig, 2018), journalistically unmediated environment (Scammell & Langer, 2006).

This research is designed to contribute to the existing research of personalisation on social media (Bronstein, 2013; Enli, 2017; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Kruikemeier, Van Noort, Vliegthart, & De Vreese, 2013; Metz, Kruikemeier, & Lecheler, 2019; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019). The institutional dimension of personalisation will not be the focus of this research, although it will be an important factor in the selection of cases for the empirical analysis. The behavioural dimension of personalisation will be tackled, to some extent, by examining citizens' interactions on political actors' fan pages. Social media have enabled users to interact in different ways, by commenting, liking, sharing, posting, etc. It is widely accepted that the internet may increase citizens' political engagement, by bringing politics closer to citizens and by providing new forms of participation (Coleman, 2009; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003).

The aim of this study is to review the assumption that the “rapid development and diffusion of social media have a bearing on the levels of personalisation” (Rahat & Kenig 2018, p. 137). Another aim of the study is to test the assumption that personal and popular cues communicated on on-line platforms by individual politicians may work to encourage citizens to like, comment on and share politicians' Facebook fan pages.

Furthermore, bearing in mind that “studies of the phenomenon of political personalisation tend to point to the variance found in its levels across countries” (Rahat & Kenig 2018, p. 137), it is the aim of this research to investigate personalisation in three different countries, the US, the UK and Croatia. More specifically, communication on the Facebook fan page of a President in a Presidential system, Barack Obama in the US; a Prime Minister in a parliamentary system, David Cameron in the UK, and a President in a parliamentary system, Ivo Josipović in Croatia, will be examined. Facebook was chosen for the analysis because it is the most popular social media network on the globe (Clement, 2019, August 2).

Most of the research that has been carried out on the personalisation of political communication is related to campaigning and election time periods, in which personalisation is not an unusual occurrence. Therefore, this research is to examine how personalisation is being exercised as a political communication strategy via social media in the long term, and not just during election time.

Traditional mass media, with television in the first place, left politicians “voiceless”, as journalists started interpreting and paraphrasing their words, mostly in a negative tone (Hallin, 1992). The intention of this research is to investigate what politicians communicate when they have an opportunity to reach citizens directly using their own voices, through social media. More specifically, this study is focused on detecting the willingness of political actors to reveal their privacy on social media sites. Additionally, it examines whether personalised posts on Facebook fan pages draw greater attention from citizens, as expressed in the number of “likes”, “shares” and comments.

Personalisation is here conceptualised on two different levels: 1. as part of the political communication strategy of political actors, 2. as an incentive/stimulus for citizens’ engagement online. In this sense three main research questions are proposed. RQ1 and RQ2 examine personalisation, privatisation and popularisation on Facebook fan pages of selected politicians on a communication strategy level, while RQ3 tries to answer what triggers citizens to like, comment upon and share certain posts, and to which extent their engagement may be explained by personal, private and popular cues communicated in the politicians’ posts.

RQ1: What was the character and intensity of personalisation on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović?

RQ2: How were private and popular cues used to communicate on Barack Obama’s, David Cameron’s and Ivo Josipović’s Facebook fan pages?

RQ3: Which personalisation traits communicated on Barack Obama’s, David Cameron’s and Ivo Josipović’s Facebook encouraged or discouraged users’ engagement?

To answer these questions, a quantitative research design was adopted. The method of analysis was content analysis while descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the data analysis.

The final sample included 2804 posts that were published on Barack Obama's Facebook fan page between 2008 and 2016, 1317 posts from David Cameron's Facebook fan page, posted between 2013 and 2016, and 850 posts that were published on Ivo Josipović's Facebook fan page between 2010 and 2015. The selected political leaders held political office in the observed time periods. Facebook posts as the unit of analysis included textual segments of the post but also photos as integral parts of the post, and numbers of likes, comments and shares that each post contained.

This study hopes to shed some light on the assumptions that social media have increasingly personalised politics, and that personal, private and popular cues on on-line platforms may work to encourage citizens to engage with politics. In the theoretical part of this research, I shall first present different dimensions and definitions of the phenomenon of the personalisation of politics. Then I shall look at the personalisation on social media. Finally, I shall provide contextual information about the three countries and three politicians included in the research. In the empirical part, I shall examine the character and intensity of personalisation of political leaders in the United States, the United Kingdom and in Croatia on their official Facebook fan pages. Moreover, I shall explore what personality and popular traits communicated in their Facebook posts may work to encourage or discourage citizens to engage i.e. to like, comment and share.

1.2 The theoretical framework of the thesis

To understand the role of social media in political communication today, we first need to understand political communication in relation to traditional mass media. In order to do so, I resorted to the concept of "mediatisation of politics" which assumes that media are becoming an increasingly more influential and important factor in shaping politics (Strömbäck, 2008). The influence and power of the media are, in this context, related to the concept of media logic, which is used to explain how political messages are selected, interpreted, and constructed, and which media-specific rules and formats are used in these processes (Esser, 2013). Many authors have criticised the process of mediatisation, media logic and, specifically, that of television which contributed to the rise of the new "news" values: conflict, simplification of issues, emotionalization, spectacularisation, eventisation, "horse race" electoral coverage, personalisation, and other storytelling techniques that are fancied by the media, especially by television, when they are covering politics. After presenting the main aspects of mediatisation

theory, the chapter discusses how the rise of social media has affected mediatisation (Schulz, 2004, p. 94) and contributed to the emergence of the “social media logic”, defined as “the norms, strategies, mechanisms, and economies underpinning the dynamics of social media” (van Dijck & Poell, 2013, p. 2).

After discussing the broader context of the mediatisation of politics and how it was re-shaped by the emergence of social media, the chapter focuses on personalisation of politics and its multiple definitions (see Grbeša, 2010; Holtz-Bacha, 2004; Langer, 2010, 2011; Van Zoonen, 2004). The most simplified definition assumes that personalisation is a growing importance of individual politicians in political communication, electoral processes, and also in the power dimension of politics. It is suggested that the growing importance of individuals in politics is driven by the modernisation of society, the changing media environment and the differences in the political systems. The process of modernisation is seen as one of the drivers of personalisation because it is characterised by the dissolution of traditional ties and the weakening of group identities, which ultimately leads to greater fragmentation of society and individualism (Dalton, 2002). The lifestyle becomes more individualised, people are more educated, the mass media have expanded, the sources of information are numerous (ibid), technology is developing, and an information revolution has occurred (Halman, 2007). All these changes have resulted in more conscious individuals, who now arrive at their own decisions, which are based on their own tastes, instead of relying on traditional group values (ibid). It has already been discussed how changes in the media environment behave as drivers of personalisation of politics. The second driver, commercialisation of the media market, along with the rise of the television, pushed news organisations to present politics in increasingly attractive ways and formats. The third driver of personalisation, political system, is believed to prominently shape the process of personalisation (Adam & Maier, 2010). For instance, it has been suggested that presidential systems are, by definition, more personalised than parliamentary systems.

“Personality politics” is divided into three dimensions: personalisation of political power, personalisation of political communication, and personalisation of electoral choices (Grbesa, 2010). Personalisation of political communication is additionally defined as the growing visibility of candidates in the media coverage of politics, and the growing visibility of candidates in the strategic communication of parties, wherein visibility may refer to “political personality traits” and/or “private personality traits” (ibid). This first aspect of personalisation,

i.e., a growing focus on individual politicians in the media coverage at the expense of parties or governments as collectives, is also known as individualisation (Van Aelst, Sheafer, & Stanyer, 2012). The second aspect of personalisation of political communication, i.e., increased media interest in the private lives of politicians, and strategic use of elements from their private life by politicians themselves, is called “privatisation of politicians” (Holtz-Bacha, 2004), or “politicisation of private personae” (Langer, 2010). Attached to concepts of personalisation and privatisation is the idea of “popularisation of politics”. The assumption is that “by using the styles and platforms associated with popular culture” politics will become popular, i.e., that large sections of a population will engage in politics (Street 2016, p. 1196). The process of mediatisation plays an important role in popularising politics, because “popularization depends on both the styles and forms of communication that are made available through forms of mass media” (ibid).

This thesis examines ways in which these concepts operate in a social media environment, i.e., how is personalisation manifested through individualisation, privatisation and popularisation, used as an online political communication strategy. Specific focus will be placed on the role of emotional appeals in online communication since emotionalization is an important factor in the processes of mediatisation and personalisation.

‘Social media’ is an umbrella term for different platforms: for blogs, forums, content-sharing platforms (YouTube, Pinterest), social gaming (Second Life), microblogs (Twitter), chat-apps (WhatsApp), and social network sites (Facebook) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media have enabled new forms of presentation and self-presentation. Today, every person who has internet and technology access can have their own personal profile, fan page, account, channel, blog. These platforms have personalised communication even more, because of their nature, infrastructure, architecture, specific rules and practices (Ekman & Widhlof, 2014; Metz et al, 2019; Vergeer, Hermans & Sams, 2013). Larsson explains that the infrastructure of social media enables politicians to directly create, choose, and send content to citizens (Larsson, 2015, 2016). Some authors, in this context, refer to social media as being composed of personally-kept platforms (Vergeer et al 2013, p. 481), saying that social media have intensified personalised campaigning (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). Similarly, it has been suggested that self-personalisation can be defined as a politicians’ intention to strategically disclose elements from her/his personal and private life on social media (McGregor, Lawrence & Cardona, 2017; Metz et al, 2019).

The appearance of politicians on social media has brought with it the professionalisation of online communication (Kreiss, 2014; Stromer-Galley, 2014). Politicians now employ social media strategists to run their campaigns on social media, and to communicate on a daily base through these new channels. Social media managers have become an important link in the chain of consultants and strategists who have taken on the assignment to manage political actors' images and to bring them votes. Barack Obama was the first politician who professionalised the use of social media in election campaigns. Obama's social media strategists were afterwards hired around the globe to give training sessions, run campaigns (Enli, 2017), give speeches. However, the trend of standardisation of messages on social media, and research-based methods for mobilising voters (Kreiss, 2014), was effective until the US Presidential elections in 2016. In these elections, the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, continued using standardised messages and advanced methods for attracting voters on social media, while the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, who won the election, had a completely different strategy, which was described as de-professionalisation and even as amateurism (Enli, 2017). Trump's tweets were amateurish and based on gut-feelings, and Clinton's tweets were carefully planned, and focus group tested (Enli 2017, p. 55). Due to this, Trump appeared to be more consistent and authentic, when compared to Clinton (ibid). Judging by the election results, citizens appreciated that. Wouters suggests that this "informalisation", fostered by Trump in recent years, led to the relaxation of social hierarchies (2007). This means that, on social media, we can all communicate equally, there is no hierarchy in communication.

It is widely accepted that the internet may increase citizens' political engagement, by bringing politics closer to citizens (Coleman, 2009; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Social media have played a significant role in enabling citizens to participate through different forms of engagement, e.g., liking, commenting, sharing, posting text, photos, videos, inviting participation in actions, and so on. In this chapter I look at the arguments of "cyber optimists" and discuss if citizens and politicians go online to debate important issues, and whether the internet politically engages those who would otherwise not engage (Barber, 1984; Budge, 1996; Coleman, 2004; Grossman, 1995; Norris, 2001).

1.3 The scopes and methods of the research

This study is set to test personalisation as an online political communication strategy of political actors and as an incentive/stimulus for citizens' engagement online. To test personalisation at

the first proposed level, bearing in mind that different political and media cultures can have effects on the character and intensity of personalisation, I have chosen three different countries, the United States, the United Kingdom and Croatia. The personalisation thesis has been widely studied in the context of Western democracies, especially the UK and the US (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Langer, 2011; Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Stanyer, 2013; Thompson, 2000; Webb & Poguntke, 2012) while studies on the personalisation of politics in the context of post-communist countries, such as Croatia, are rather scarce (Grbeša, 2008, 2010; Šimunjak, 2014). Also, most of these studies examine personalisation as increased media attention on individual politicians, while the strategic dimension of personalisation is studied less. Hence, the intention of this study is to examine how the phenomenon of personalisation of political communication is manifested in two developed Western democracies, the UK and the US, and one post-communist country Croatia, in a controlled media environment, on the most popular social media platform Facebook (Clement, 2019, August 2). Facebook posts published on fan pages of the former US president Barack Obama, former UK Prime Minister David Cameron and former Croatian president Ivo Josipović will be examined. The selected data are suitable for comparisons on the level of Facebook communication for several reasons¹: content analysis of Facebook posts was made in all three cases by using the same code sheet; the time-frames in which the examined posts were published overlap for all three cases from 2013 to 2015, while in the case of Obama and Josipović the overlapping period is even longer (from 2010 to 2015); also, at the time of research, all three politicians were incumbents running for their second terms in office. To test the personalisation on the second proposed level as an incentive for Facebook users' interactions, the numbers of likes, comments and shares for each examined post were included in the analysis.

The empirical analysis was divided into three parts. The first part of the analysis is set up to examine the character and intensity of personalisation on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. The second part attempts to answer how private and popular cues were used to communicate on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook fan pages. The third part tries to reveal which traits communicated on Obama's,

¹ The reasoning for selecting these cases to some extent relies on the research of Šimunjak (2014, 2017) in which the author compares personalisation of political communication in daily newspapers in Yugoslavia, Croatia and the UK. Šimunjak compared the personalisation in these countries based on the level of appearance of leaders in newspaper articles, in similar time periods, by using similar sampling methods and indicators of person-centred reporting as were used in the study conducted on the British case (for more details see Šimunjak, 2014, p. 209).

Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook encourage or discourage users' engagement, expressed in numbers of likes, comments and shares.

To answer these questions a quantitative study was conducted. The final sample included 2804 posts published between 2008 and 2016 on Barack Obama's fan page, 1317 posts published in the period from 2013 to 2016 from David Cameron's fan page, and 850 posts from Ivo Josipović's fan page published in the period from 2010 to 2015. The research method was quantitative content analysis while for the data analysis descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Quantitative content analysis was employed to examine the posts, and descriptive statistics was used to quantitatively describe and summarise the data. Content analysis was used because it is based predominantly on counting and measuring quantities of items giving, at the same time, considerable thought to "kinds", 'qualities' and 'distinctions' in the text before any quantification takes place (Bauer, 2000, p. 132). OLS regression analysis was used to answer the third research question. OLS regression is used because it enables the simultaneous analysis of the impact of multiple independent variables on a continuous dependent variable (Petz et al, 2012). In other words, regression analysis is used to identify significant relationships between cues communicated in the Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's posts, and the numbers of citizens' likes, comments and shares.

The code sheet was derived from previous work by Kaid and Johnston (2001), Grbeša (2010), Wattenberg (1991) and Wilke and Reinemann (2001). It contained 24 categories and 108 values, which were divided into three main sections. The first section of the code sheet deals with personalisation and political content in the posts and tries to reveal if the focus of the posts is predominantly on issues or political and private profile of political actors. The posts are coded for the presence, and subsequently, the dominance of certain content, including: emphasis on the leader and his/her political or private profile; issue-related content, different dominant strategies, (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 18), type of the post, calls for action. In this context, the visibility, as a general indicator of personalisation, of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in the posts which contained photos was examined.

The second part of the code sheet is the most extensive and contains questions regarding different indicators of privatisation. Privatisation is examined relying on Holtz-Bacha's (2004, pp. 45-46) three goals of privatisation: humanisation, emotionalization, and striving for celebrity status. Different settings in which Obama, Cameron and Josipović appeared were

regarded as one indicator of humanisation. The second one is the appearance of ordinary citizens in the posts, understood as an intention of politicians to appear approachable and in touch with the people. The third indicator of humanisation are references to private lives, and specifically to family life. Emotionalization was explored through the presence of emotional appeals in the posts. To examine the third goal of privatisation, striving for celebrity status, the posts were coded for the presence of references to popular culture and the presence of celebrities in the posted photos.

The third part of the analysis was set up to analyse what triggers citizens' engagement on Facebook, and which cues act as drivers for liking, commenting on and sharing of politicians' fan pages. In addition, it examines to which extent citizens' engagement on Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's pages can be explained by private and popular cues communicated via their fan pages. This part of the analysis is conducted by using selected categories obtained from the content analysis and numbers of likes, comments and shares obtained for every examined post using the program language Python. To answer the proposed research question OLS regression models were designed for Obama, Cameron and Josipović to reveal if some variables have the explanatory power to predict numbers of likes, comments and shares.

Although Facebook is managed by communication teams and/or leaders themselves, meaning that comments can be removed, that some posts can be better promoted using Facebook ads etc., this research is still relevant on the level of a communication strategy because it demonstrates how politicians use personalisation as a strategy. Also, the study of interactivity, despite possible biases, is still indicative of Facebook users' preferences when it comes to liking, commenting or sharing certain content.

To sum up, this thesis analyses personalisation as an online political communication strategy and as an incentive for Facebook users' engagement. I will be looking at different dimensions of personalisation, and how these dimensions are used as tactics. It will examine which of these dimensions of personalisation has the biggest engagement potential. The methodological approach and research design are set up to establish the character and strength of candidates' personalisation on Facebook, and to tell us more about the engaging potential of privatisation and popularisation, when they are used strategically.

1.4 Scientific relevance of the dissertation and originality of the research

The aim of this study is to deconstruct the tools and to unpack the patterns of online personalisation strategies. Similar studies have analysed video ads, stressing that their “journalistic unmediated nature” offers the clearest evidence of how parties/candidates choose to present themselves to the mass of voters” (Scammell & Langer, 2006, p. 764). However, video ads are usually only an election campaign tool, and the presence of personalisation is not unusual during this period. This study has examined online communication on a platform on which political actors can communicate continually and in a “journalistic unmediated” way. So far only a few studies have examined personalisation during longer time stretches and not just in the immediate campaign periods (Sorensen, 2016; Metz et al., 2019). Yet to my knowledge, there is no comparative study of personalisation that includes both periods presidential/prime ministerial terms and election campaigns.

An important contribution is related to the selection of the countries for analysis. Aside from differences in political and media systems, the US, the UK and Croatia have significantly different approaches to privacy: in the US sharing a private perspective and personal content is more normalised (Metz et al., 2019) than in Croatia, or in the UK, where it was found that the manifestation of the phenomenon depends a lot on the characteristics of the candidate (Langer, 2010). Similar studies of personalisation of the online environment have mostly included single country studies, Germany (Metz et al., 2019), the US (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015), Hungary (Bene, 2017), Croatia (Šimunjak, Sinčić Ćorić & Brečić, 2017), while studies including multiple cases have been rare.

Furthermore, this study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by trying to answer whether political actors’ Facebook fan pages can serve as a platform for engaging citizens in online activities that are related to politics. The extent to which their engagement, as expressed in the numbers of likes, comments and shares, can be explained by private and popular cues that are communicated by the leaders via their Facebook fan pages, is also examined. This is also one of the rare studies examining the potential of certain cues for online engagement.

The methodological novelty of the study lies in the categories of content analysis that are able to unpack different aspects of personalisation and to suggest their engagement potential. Moreover, this study includes visual elements of the Facebook posts in the analysis. Most of the earlier studies included only textual segments of the post, because the programs for scraping

data from the internet, usually cannot scrape visuals, and most often cannot scrape large amounts of visuals, as was necessary for my study. Including the visual elements of the posts enabled me to examine the visibility of politicians and their family members in the photos. Moreover, visuals decisively contributed to analysing emotional appeals since they may not be explicitly present in the text but are often less explicitly present in accompanying images.

1.5 Limitations of the research

The first limitation that I would like to stress is the sample of the countries. Although the selection of the countries brings novelty to the project, including even more countries in the analysis would have been a great asset.

Secondly, as I study only Facebook and no other social media, it puts certain limitations to my interpretations. It leaves a question as to whether all of the findings in the study are only unique to communication on Facebook or more general inductions are possible. Future studies should also include an analysis of communication on Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms.

Thirdly, personalisation in this study is taken as given, i.e., it is assumed that personalisation on social media fan pages of individual politicians exists, and then levels and character of personalisation are investigated. As Rahat & Kenig (2018) suggest, personalisation should not be taken as a given, and in this context, it would be relevant to examine personalisation on the fan pages of institutions, for instance, on the Facebook fan page of the White House and compare it to the characteristics and levels of personalisation found on Obama's page in order to reveal if, for instance, on the fan page of the White House we can also find traits of privatisation and popularisation or it is something reserved for leaders' "personal" fan pages, i.e. fan pages that have their names.

The fourth limitation is related to the shortcomings of the software tools for online scraping of data. Most text scraping tools cannot scrape photos, which were crucial for my study. Besides, scraping posts that date a few years back was another problem. When going back days, weeks, or months, one can retrieve all of the data, but when going back in years, one will most probably not be able to access all the data that was online at a certain point in history. Judging on the number of posts that I managed to scrape, I believe that my sample includes a remarkable

amount of data, but I am still sure that some of the posts were missing. The third problem with data collection was data archiving. I did not find a convenient program for archiving my data, which resulted in at least 15 large word documents, into which all of the posts were copy/pasted. Archiving data in this way complicates present and future analyses.

Also, limitations were found regarding the coding of the variable emotional appeals, which was one of the most important questions in this research. It was difficult to distinguish between positive news and emotionally loaded content. This was reflected in the coder's bias that was confirmed by running an intra-coder and inter-coder reliability test (see section 4.5 and Appendix 3 for the results of conducted tests for each included variable).

Another limitation is related to qualitative analysis which could have been conducted on a selected sample of posts and thus would have enriched this research, especially in relation to the empirical analysis of the concept of emotionalization. Applying for instance discourse analysis on a sample of posts would have provided a more thorough and comprehensive answer as to how emotionally loaded the political content on social media actually is. The idea of conducting discourse analysis on a stratified sample of posts was included in the first draft of my thesis proposal. Yet, it was abandoned as not feasible because the sample for quantitative content analysis, which was the prioritised method in this thesis, was unexpectedly large and thus made the coding and processing of data exceptionally labour intensive. Besides, the results of content analysis were deemed sufficient for answering the main research questions of this thesis.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first is the introduction, the second is the theoretical chapter, in which I will define concepts of the mediatisation of politics and personalisation of political communication, its origins, manifestations and implications in the changing media environment, with a focus on social media and how the personalisation of political communication is manifested on social media. The mediatisation of politics will be elaborated in the context of the rise of the new media and the implications that it has on the process of mediatisation. The phenomenon of personalisation of politics will be discussed in the context of a changing media environment and the rise of popular culture, the process of party dealignment and the erosion of cleavage politics. Then the chapter will look at two dimensions of personalisation of politics: individualisation and privatisation, also known as the

“politicisation of private personae”. The role of television in the personalisation of politics will then be discussed in this context, as well as the assumed negative consequences of personalisation, such as trivialisation of politics. After that, the chapter introduces theories about the role of the internet and social media in politics. Specific focus will be given to the role of social media in the personalisation of political communication. Some new emerging trends, like the “de-professionalisation” of online political communication, amateurism and authenticity, on social media, will be discussed, along with permanent campaigning. Early optimistic viewpoints about the role of the internet in strengthening the ties between the representatives and the represented, in facilitating greater political participation and strengthening the democracy will then be elaborated. Pessimistic theories will also be a part of this discussion, stressing the growing problem of distrust or cynicism in the political system.

In the third chapter, the personalisation of politics will be discussed in the context of three different democracies: The United States, the United Kingdom and Croatia. Firstly, the political system as one of the key drivers of personality politics will be discussed for each country. Secondly, findings of the previous studies on the personalisation thesis in the US, the UK and Croatia will be presented, followed by a brief presentation of the selected politicians Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. The chapter closes by presenting the patterns of social media use in these countries.

The fourth chapter brings the empirical analysis, along with the research design of the study. The choice of method, cases, the sample, the time span, and explanations of the code sheets are included in this chapter. The empirical analysis tests the personalisation of politics on Facebook. Personalisation is tested as the intention of political actors to rely on their personality traits to appeal to citizens. Whether different forms of personalisation that are communicated on fan pages affect citizens’ intention to engage online, is also explored.

The fifth chapter brings results and discussion. The first part with the results is divided into four sections. The first section presents findings pertaining to the presence of political content in the posts; the second and third parts bring results referring to private and popular cues in the posts; the final part contains the results of regression analysis related to the relationship between the content and users’ engagement where likes, comments and shares are used as a proxy for engagement. The discussion part of the chapter is divided into three sections that provide

answers to proposed research questions. The sixth, and final, chapter brings the conclusion and suggestions for future research.

2 THE THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Changes in the media environment, alongside modernisation and individualisation of society, and changes in political systems, are seen as being the main causes of personality politics (Grbeša, 2009; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). The focus of this thesis is on one dimension of personality politics the “personalisation of political communication” or, as some authors call it, “media personalisation” (Langer & Sargazazu, 2018; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). The following chapters focus on processes and elements that are crucial for understanding the rise of personalisation of political communication - the process of mediatisation, modernisation and differences in political systems.

2.1 The mediatisation of politics

The term ‘mediatisation’ is widely used in different situations, sometimes, it even serves as a buzz word or empty signifier. Deacon and Stanyer (2014) regard mediatisation as a catch-all term. We can often hear that politics is mediatised today, that culture is mediatised and that we live in the mediatised world (Strömbäck, 2008). What, then, is mediatisation, and how can we define it? What is the role of mediatisation in politics and society? Is mediatisation something positive or negative? Many authors have tried to answer these questions (Asp & Esaiasson, 1996; Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; Esser, 2013; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Meyer, 2002; Schulz, 2004; Strömbäck, 2008, 2011; Strömbäck & Esser, 2009). Explanations of the term mediatisation that are given by these authors could be summarised under the definition given by Strömbäck, who said that mediatisation can be defined as “a change in the relationship between the media and society, in which the media are the most influential and important factor embodied in different spheres of society” (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 229). In other words, prominent authors (Hjarvard, 2008; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Meyer, 2002; Schulz, 2004; Strömbäck, 2008, 2011; Strömbäck & Esser, 2009) agree that mediatisation refers to the role and power of the media in shaping today’s world and in fostering social change. The appearance and existence of the phenomenon is related to the expansion of television (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 249). The mediatisation of politics is driven by commercialisation and the expansion of media systems and became a major trend in the political systems of the 1990s and has remained one of the main trends today (ibid).

Schulz (2004) defines the role of media in shaping today’s society through processes of extension, substitution, amalgamation and accommodation. Extension refers to the fact that

media technologies have expanded human communication and bypassed many of the limitations of time, space and costs. Media technologies can now also work as a substitute for social activities. Back in 2004, when this article was published, Schulz wrote about how “telephone, email and SMS communication substitute conversation and writing letters; television viewing replaces family interaction” (2004, p. 89). Yet he explains how, in some examples, extension and substitution work together, one way of communication is substituted by another but, at the same time, the communication is extended. For instance, when sending an SMS there are no time and space limitations, while, when sending a letter, the communication is much slower, and is consequently less intensive and is out of date. However, from today’s perspective in the age of social media mania, we can argue that substitutions are greater than ever before. Social media have enabled people to connect with each other all around the world, to see everyone’s lives in real time, but, at the same time, social media have created a superficial and twisted world, in which selfishness, arrogance and individualism rule. Online lives often substitute for real lives, online connections and communication substitute for real life relationships but, at the same time, these lives, online and offline, merge, which brings us to the process of amalgamation. “As media use becomes an integral part of private and social life, the media’s definition of reality amalgamates with the social definition of reality” (Schulz, 2004, p. 89). Although, in 2004, Schulz could not refer to social media as we know it today, his definition perfectly describes the present relationship between media technologies and users, because media use has become an integral part of the essence of private and social life.

Further, in the context of mediatisation, the process of accommodation is most significant because it explains how political actors adapt to the rules of media logic in order to increase their positive media coverage, at the cost of losing some of their autonomy (Schulz, 2004, pp. 88-90). Mazzoleni and Schulz, find:

“There is no doubt that much “politics of substance” is still practiced away from media spotlights, behind the scenes, in the discreet rooms of parliament and government. Yet politics by its very nature, and independent of its substantive or symbolic value, sooner or later must go through the “publicity” stage, which entails use of the media (for example, to make known the terms of a policy decision), resort to the means of persuasion, and exposure to scrutiny by the press” (1999, p. 259).

An interesting example in this context would be TV debates. Esser (2013) discovers how the TV debate, as a format, in some ways demonstrates a clash between the media and the political logics. On the one hand, politicians in TV debates have the opportunity to speak directly to the public without journalistic interpretations and representations, but, on the other, politicians who

are taking part in the debate are already constrained by the format of the debate, given time for each answer, and, of course, with forecasts and predictions of who will “win” the debate that precede the programming days in advance.

Most other authors likewise define mediatisation in relation to media influence, they say that mediatisation is a “development towards increasing media influence” explaining further that “media’s influence can be exerted over people’s perceptions and over political institutions, respectively” (Asp & Esaiasson 1996, pp. 80–81). The concept of media thus primarily refers to the news media, as an institution. This includes all those media that form part of “the news media system in a particular country, primarily television, newspapers, radio and news magazines, regardless of whether they are published in their traditional or digital formats, or whether they are only published online” (Schulz, 2014, p. 62). Esser further discusses the characteristics of the media that define the media as institutions. He finds that the media are an institution because of the power that they have (2013, p. 160). From this point of view, media logic is defined as a “trans-organizational mode of operation”, which is the core institutional feature of the news media (Esser, 2013). Media logic becomes institutional rule in perceiving and interpreting the world and in defining appropriate behaviour. Likewise, Hjarvard says that the media become an integral part of the way that institutions in society operate, but that it has also developed its autonomous entity, with its own institutional logic (2008, p. 113).

2.1.1 Mediatisation in four stages

The mediatisation of politics discussed in the following paragraph has four different stages, in which, at every stage, media influence is growing. “The first stage of mediatisation is seen in a society or political system in which the mass media constitute the dominant communication channel between those who govern and those who are governed” (Asp & Esaiasson, 1996, p. 81). This means that most of information about the world and politics that people get are put out via the media. Strömbäck notices that this phase corresponds to the definition of mediated politics, wherein mediated politics happens in every setting in which the mass media serve as a major source of information and communication between citizens and different political actors (2008, p. 236). The difference between mediation and the first phase of mediatisation still exists, and it lies in the fact that mediation is a more neutral concept, it is static, and its influence is limited. On the other hand, mediatisation is an inherently dynamic and process-oriented concept, and it goes beyond the function of transmitting messages (see Esser & Strömbäck, 2014, p. 4). The media influence in this phase is thus evident in the fact that people read

newspapers, watch TV and listen to the radio, because they form their opinions, attitudes and perceptions based on what they have consumed from the media (Strömbäck, 2008). This notion makes the first phase of mediatisation a prerequisite for the existence of further phases of mediatisation (ibid).

This brings us to the second stage of mediatisation, in which the mass media become “independent actors who exercise great influence on the governing body and the people” (Asp & Esaiasson, 1996, p. 81). This means that the mass media do not have an impact only on the citizenry by giving them information and serving as the primary channel of communication between political institutions, politicians, political groups, political organisations, and other political actors, but now they have direct influence on politics. According to Strömbäck (2008) this increased media influence has occurred because the media have become more autonomous and independent of governmental or other political bodies. He also explains that the media, in this stage, are no longer only mediators, serving as a channel by which messages from different influential sources are unconditionally transmitted. The media now make their own judgments and decide freely which message, and what content, will be published. Strömbäck and Esser say that the independence of the media is crucial for the existence of mediatisation (2014, p. 13). Moreover, Asp and Esaiasson (1996, p. 81) argue that the media now give their “own stamp on the picture of politics that they mediate via their power of selection and interpretation”, meaning that the media have power over the picture that influences the audiences. Consequently, at this stage, media logic becomes increasingly influential. The development of the second phase is also driven by the rise of journalistic professionalisation and media commercialisation (Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch, & Weaver, 1991). These processes were happening in parallel, and it is obvious that without commercialisation the media would remain dependent on different political actors, and without increased journalistic professionalisation, the role of the media would remain limited to the unconditional transmission of messages. In this context, we can also talk about the advent of a media society (Mazzoleni, 2008). The idea of a media society suggests that the traditional mass media, together with the new online media, have become an integral part of social life. Moreover, it implies that the media have become so important that almost all of the interaction and exchanges in all spheres of society are happening through different media channels (ibid). The media society is a society in which political and religious organisations become less important because the media are no longer dependent on their sponsorships. The media are now led by the laws of media logic, a concept that will be discussed in the context of the third stage of mediatisation.

In the third phase of mediatisation, the media exert another kind of power, invisible power (Asp & Esaiasson, 1996, p. 81). This invisible face of media power means that the active mechanism is no longer direct influence, but adaptation. Adaptation means that society is not just influenced by the media, but that society, to a significant extent, adapts itself to the media logic. In other words, society and politics now have to think in the way that the media think, they have to adapt “to the working routines of mass media and the conditions that the media set up” (ibid). In this context, Hjarvard goes further, and says that society not only adapts to the media logic, but is to an “increasing degree submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic” (2008, p. 113). Altheide and Snow even say that “today all social institutions are media institutions” (1991, p. ix). They believe that organised journalism is dead because media formats today have become much more important than the substance of the news. Moreover, in their words: “...the topics, organizations, and issues that journalists report are themselves products of media-journalistic format and criteria” (Altheide & Snow 1991, p. x). This leads to a situation in which the media reports on different political and social actors constitute the reflections of the media themselves and their logic (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 238). Hence, “media logic” is today a dominant way of perceiving social and public affairs (Altheide & Snow, 1991). Let us discuss the concept of media logic in more detail.

In defining the term ‘media logic’, the first definition is given by Altheide and Snow, who said that:

“Media logic consists of a form of communication; the process through which media present and transmit information. Elements of this form include the various media and the formats used by these media. Format consists, in part, of how material is organized, the style in which it is presented, the focus or emphasis on particular characteristics of behaviour, and the grammar of media communication. Format becomes a framework or a perspective that is used to present as well as interpret phenomena” (1979, p. 10).

In this definition, the authors stress the importance of the format, saying that reporting is subordinated to the formats in which news is presented. Altheide later explained the importance of the format as a feature of media logic, saying that format: “is singularly important because it refers to the rules or ‘codes’ for defining, selecting, organising, presenting, and recognising information as one thing rather than another (e.g., ‘the evening news’ and not a ‘situation comedy’, or a ‘parody of news’)” (2004, p. 4).

Hjarvard further says that media logic is “a conceptual shorthand for the various institutional, aesthetic, and technological modus operandi of the media, including the ways in which the media distribute material and symbolic resources, and operate with the help of formal and informal rules” (2013, p. 17). Strömbäck gives a similar definition for the “news media logic”: “The institutional, technological, and sociological characteristics of the news media, including their format characteristics, production and dissemination routines, norms and needs, standards of newsworthiness, and to the formal and informal rules that govern news media” (2011, p. 373). Likewise, Esser stresses three constituents of news-media logic: professional aspects, commercial and technological aspects (2013, p. 167). Professional aspects refer to journalistic norms and criteria that have to be followed in news production, while commercial aspects refer to the economic rules that have to be integrated into the process of publishing. The third aspect is technological, and it deals with the different technological specificities of a certain medium. To sum up, media logic is used to explain how news political messages are selected, interpreted, and constructed and which media-specific rules are used in these processes (Esser, 2013, p. 160).

In this context, the concept of media interventionism has to be mentioned, which is defined as: “a media-centered political reporting style in which, increasingly, journalists and media actors become the stories’ main newsmakers rather than politicians or other social actors. It can be interpreted as a professionally motivated behaviour by journalists to increase their influence, authority and prestige—and, ultimately, their control over the news content” (Strömbäck & Esser, 2009, p. 217). For the concept “journalistic intervention” see Blumler and Gurevitch (1995). Authors take elections as an example in which journalists rarely give politicians the opportunity to present themselves and their policies in their own words in the news, but, rather, they give interpretations and then report in their own journalistic way. Strömbäck and Esser (2009) see media interventionism as a crucial part of the process of the mediatisation of politics, and they see it as an engine of the process itself.

When talking about the three different aspects of media logic and the different levels of media interventionism, it is important to remember Hallin and Mancini’s three different media-system models: the liberal model, the democratic corporatist model and the polarised pluralist model (2004). These models are based on the differences between the nature of the relationship between the media and politics in different environments and contexts (ibid). The liberal model, as may be assumed, refers to those media systems in which economic aspects and the rule of

the market's mechanisms prevail. In these systems, which can be found in North America, Great Britain and Ireland, the commercial media are dominant (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 11). The democratic corporatist model refers to those systems in which commercial media and media related to certain social and political groups cohabit. In these systems, the state also has a certain role in defining the rules of media production. This model is recognised in continental northern European countries. The polarised pluralist model is present in the Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe and is characterised by the strong role of the state, strong ties between the media and political parties, and weaker commercial media (ibid).

Media-system models are important in relation to the process of mediatisation, because it reveals in which countries and media-systems media logic will be most influential (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). For instance, in countries in which the rule of the media market is dominant, and where the media have to fight for every reader and every viewer, media logic will be more important in the relationship between media and politics. In these systems, the media must find a way, through the use of attractive and interesting formats, to attract the public, to gain attention, and to earn money, at the end of the day (ibid). This idea is also supported by the findings, which discovered that political reporting styles in the US are associated with a more interventionist approach than, for instance, in France, where a non-interventionist approach was discovered (Esser, 2008). The level of interventionism was measured with the opportunities given to political actors to speak directly to the public in their own words. If politicians had chances to present themselves in their own words in relation to how much journalists presented them in a journalistic way, it is considered that the media interventionism was not at a high level. Results indicated that in the French media system, reporting was construed by political logic, was less independently-minded and more passive, meaning that media interventionism was insignificant. On the contrary, the study discovered that, in the US, the interventionism of journalists was much higher. Journalists were shortening candidates' on-air statements, while political candidates tried to control their message with the most tightly scripted campaigns. This example shows how media logic is practiced by journalists, on the one hand, and politicians, on the other. While journalists resist following campaign scripts and report only what politicians want them to report, politicians fight to control the message, to give soundbites and tell as little as possible, because the less they say, the less there will be in the hands of the journalists.

Social and political actors are adapting to the media. This "adaptation" is ever-present, it means adapting to the demands that the media place on simplifying an issue, on confrontation,

personification and polarisation (Asp & Esaiasson, 1996, p. 81). Similarly, Strömbäck (2008, p. 238) talks about conflict and personalisation as important “storytelling techniques”, which are favoured by the media when covering politics. Some other authors mention visualisation and stereotyping, and the framing of politics as a strategic game or “horse race” (Mazzoleni, 1987; Patterson, 1993). In this context, Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) talk about the “spectacularisation” of political communication formats and of political discourse itself. This spectacularisation consists of, and is driven by, different formats that fit television discourse, like spot ads, television debates and talk shows, and with other newly established political marketing patterns: staged events on the campaign trail, marketing research techniques, growing propaganda expenditures, the use of methods for engineering public opinion and consent, such as political opinion polling, spin doctoring, etc. (ibid). To this point Mazzoleni and Schulz say: “The language of politics has been married with that of advertising, public relations, and show business. What is newsworthy, what hits the headlines, what counts in the public sphere or in the election campaign are communication skills, the style of addressing the public, the “look,” the image, even the special effects” (1999, p. 251).

We can talk about the mediatisation of politics when political actors create an event whose purpose is to draw media attention, these events are often called pseudo-events, (Boorstin, 1961) or media events (Dayan & Katz, 1992). Often, these events are staged so that they fit the media’s timing, location, and framing (ibid). Social and political actors are thus well-disposed to the simplification of issues and visualisation, polarisation and conflict, and very often towards personalisation. Consequently, personalisation, conflict, simplification, etc. are becoming ever more important terms in shaping politics and society around us. Finally, this brings us to so-called fourth phase of mediatisation, in which media logic is overruling politics.

While, in the third phase, media and media logic are still perceived as being external to the politics and political logic², in the fourth phase, media logic becomes an essential part of the politics (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 239). Politics now is not only adapted to the media logic, but it adopts media logic (ibid). In other words, in this phase, “political and social actors not only adapt to the media logic and the predominant news values: proximity, drama, conflict and personalisation, but also *internalize* these and, more or less consciously, allow the media logic

² Political logic is a less developed and studied concept (Esser, 2013). Political logic has three dimensions: polity, policy and politics. In this context, Esser refers to “differentiating between the ‘production of politics’ and ‘self-presentation of politics’ within the political system (2013, p. 164).”

and the standards of newsworthiness to become a built-in part of the governing processes” (ibid). Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) also support the idea that the process of media reporting is contributing to the mediatisation of politics. It suggests that the policy making process is affected by the media logic. This means, thus, that politicians, during the policy decision-making process, think about the media and how those media will report on their decisions. They therefore sometimes arrive at decisions based on what they think that, the media want and based on what they think the media will cover most positively. In what way will they implement media logic features is context dependent, for instance, where those seeking for re-election are more subordinated to media logic than those who do not (Strömbäck, 2008).

Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) point to what we often forget when talking about the power(less) media, and that is the fact that media reality, i.e., what media choose and present as reality, is often, the only reality for many citizens, and often also for the political elite, particularly in those domains of activity where most people have no direct, personal access to what has happened. One can argue that in the age of social media, this argument fades, but it will be hard to refute that the mainstream media are still powerful and strong agenda setters. This argument merges with the idea that the “mass media construct the public sphere of information and opinion and control the terms of their exchange” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 250). The media select events and issues, actors and frames, in which these events and actors will be covered, thus shaping a media-constructed public sphere. Strömbäck offers the same argument: “In important respects, the mediated realities replace the notion of a belief in objective realities. The significance of the mediated realities is thus inversely correlated to the importance of the distinction between the mediated versus the actual realities. As the latter distinction breaks down, the significance of the mediated realities increases, and vice versa” (2008, p. 240).

However, it is important to stress that politics is much more what we see on daily basis. In this discussion, it is important to take into account the definition of political logic, which is understood through three dimensions: politics, policy, polity (Meyer, 2002). Policy refers to production side of politics, policy making and policy implementation (Esser, 2013, p. 164). The polity aspect is about the institutional framework and the system of rules within which political processes are happening (ibid). Lastly, and most importantly in the context of mediatisation, is the politics dimension. Esser finds that the politics dimension, in its substance, is the self-presentational side of politics (2013, p. 165). Since “presentation” is at the core of this aspect of political logic it understands the usage of the different strategies and techniques that any

“presentation” comprehends. In the case of politics, these strategies usually include pseudo-events, symbolic politics, image building, and relying on individuals and issues. The goal of the politics aspect is to gain the support of the electorate, and the politics aspect does not deal with the processes and substance, it deals with presenting certain issues, programs or political actors. “Formally speaking, self-presentational politics is dominant in the stages of interest articulation and preference mobilisation, problem definition, policy communication, and outcome justification” (Esser, 2013, p. 165). It can be said that the politics aspect is what we see from politics, it is at the forefront with the task of convincing the electorate to “buy” everything that is happening behind the scenes.

Esser (2013) further notices that this aspect of political logic comes to the fore especially during election campaigns, but also when elected politicians approach governing as a permanent campaign (for more details on permanent campaigning, see 2.3.2). When accused of trivialising politics and reducing serious processes to pseudo-events, symbols, slogans, soundbites, (social)media, likable candidates, etc., many will say that this dimension of political logic has a democratic function, because it visualises and personalises responsiveness and responsibility (ibid), it also simplifies and presents politics as more understandable to, and approachable by, the ordinary citizens (the concept of the popularisation of politics will be discussed in the following sections). The suggested logic is that citizens will more easily understand political processes if they can identify parts of them with a flesh and blood person (the personalisation of politics). Politicians, when publicly exposed and identified with certain issues, will also be more responsible and responsive.

Although, what has so far been said points to the dominance of the media in the media and politics relationship, the theory of the mediatisation of politics has been questioned many times. For instance, Bennett introduces indexing theory, which is built on the idea that politics affects the media and not the other way around (1990). He explains that the media are not interested in discovering and setting new issues and themes but, rather, they cover only the issues which are already in the focus of political elites (ibid). This theory suggests that politics sets the agenda for the media, that media will be covering stories which are given to them by politicians. Similarly, Wolfsfeld (2011) introduces the PMP-model, where “PMP” means Politics-Media-Politics. He argues that politics is the most important actor in the process of agenda setting and that the media only take what politics gives to them. However, the truth is somewhere in between. “News construction is a negotiated process” (Bennett & Livingston, 2003, p. 359).

Media and politics both have important roles in the final outputs which are, in the end, served up to citizens. As Hepp et al. say: "... media and politics may work in tandem, enabling a simultaneous mediatisation of politics and a politicization of media" (Hepp, Hjavard & Lundby, 2015, pp. 4-5).

To sum up: the mediatisation of politics is a long-term process which refers to the increasing influence of the media and media logic both in politics and in society in general. Four stages of mediatisation have been discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. The first phase happens when the media are the dominant source of information and are a communication channel between political actors and citizenry. Although the media are the primary source of information in this phase, they do not have great power, because they mostly serve as a transmitter of the messages. This phase is thus equalised with the process of the mediation of politics. The second phase is characterised by an increase in media independence and freedom. This means that the political institutions, in this phase, no longer have control over the media in terms of how the media are governed. In parallel, the influence of the media is increasing, because they can now independently decide what is worth publishing. In the third phase, media content is the focus, and the combat between media logic and political logic is conducted, i.e., between the media's own needs and the standards of newsworthiness. In other words, media formats are becoming more and more important, which leads to the increasing use of different storytelling techniques by the political and social actors. Finally, in the fourth phase, we are concerned with the question regarding the degree to which politics is governed by a political logic or by a media logic. This phase is the most important, because it deals with the effects of the media in political processes and on political actors and institutions. Media power is not always visible, political and social actors adapt to the media logic to a great extent, and we often cannot see the difference between what they really do and what they say, because something has to be done or said, and what they do and say because the media will cover it positively. To conclude: mediatisation suggests that "the media have increased their status significantly at the expense of political actors and institutions, but also that media influence is not unconditional and that it might be indirect as well as direct" (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014, p. 21).

How significant the effects of the mediatisation of politics will be in a certain context depends on how much the people in that context are dependent on the media as sources of political information. Shehata and Strömbäck, (2014, p. 109) state that we cannot know for sure how important the media are as a source of political information. In the new media environment,

with the advent of social media networks and dozens of different sources for any kind of information, it is harder than ever to identify the importance of media institutions as sources of political information. In the following section, the role of the internet in the mediatisation of politics will be discussed.

2.1.2 Mediatisation in the new media environment

Let me start this discussion with a quotation: “The crucial question in the context of the mediatisation of politics is rather whether the internet makes the media more or less (in)dependent of political institutions, media content more or less governed by political versus media logic, and political actors more or less governed by political versus media logic” (Strömbäck 2008, p. 243). This question suggests that the mediatisation perspective has to be challenged, because the new media environment now offers a wide variety of alternative information sources, followed by new opportunities for participation in the public sphere (Schulz, 2014, p. 68). Furthermore, relying on the definition which puts television at the core of the mediatisation process, Schulz asks if, now, when the television era seems to be at its end and new media is on the rise, the mediatisation concept disappears (2004, p. 94). Similarly, Bennet and Iyengar (2008) talk about the dawning of “a new era of minimal effects”, since people in the new media environment can easily find political content that conforms to their existing ideological orientations. Building their thesis on the analysis of a polarising political culture and media system in the United States, they expect that the media will reinforce, rather than change, audiences’ world views.

Schulz gives three possible scenarios as to what will happen with the process of mediatisation in the digital era. The first answer is optimistic, as Schulz sees it, saying that new media can “reduce or even remove the constraints which traditional media impose on communication processes” (2004, p. 95). The new media have enabled users to choose content which they want to consume and not the content which is served to them and selected by the media; they can create content and communicate interactively; new channels of communication have given the opportunity to those who were often excluded from the public sphere, delinquents or victims, to have their voice heard; furthermore, new media has not brought advantages only to the citizens, it has also enabled political actors to have direct communication with the citizens, new channels of communication have enabled them to bypass the mass media and to avoid adapting to the media logic (2004, p. 95). While, in the first possible scenario, some scholars predict the end of mediatisation, because of the new features that the new media now offer, the second

answer is sceptical, suggesting that “the new media may give rise to new modes of mediatisation originating from their specific relay functions, semiotics and economics” (ibid). These specific functions, semiotics and economics mainly refer to: the availability of the internet in different parts of the world and in society, the problem that is often summarised under the term “the digital divide”; to the infrastructure, choices and modes of the web applications which put certain constraints and limitations on the users; to the problem of standardising communication and making the English language the universal *lingua franca* of the computer-based world (Schulz, 2004, p. 95). The third moderate answer deals with the definition of the new media and the notion that the traditional media now have their online versions, but are still the same media. As Schulz puts it: It is like “providing old wine in new bottles” (2004, p. 98). Online versions of the mass media are indeed still very important source of information, but now diverse political organisations, knowledge bases, such as Wikipedia, bloggers, different social media groups, etc., also have an intermediary function (ibid). This answer thus suggests that mediatisation will still be an important process in shaping social reality, because the new media will not displace the old media.

Furthermore, the power of the media is questioned also because, in the new media environment, every user has at least a spark of power in the selection of political messages, but also in creating those messages. Web 2.0 applications enable citizens to collaborate, to create, to share, comment, like, invite, organise off- and online activities (Harrison & Barthel, 2009). Citizens now have the power to react to official statements and journalists’ stories, they have the opportunity to give another side of the story, they can bring in new evidence and arguments, and they can do that through different online spaces, social media, official web pages, emails, etc. (Schulz, 2014, p. 68). How new media developments question the homogeneous media logic is also widely discussed, because political actors are now becoming less dependent on the classical news media and their logic, but they can now directly communicate with their targeted groups and individuals. However, scholars also warn of many disappointments that the new media have brought with them. For instance, the spread of unreliable information, today known as a fake news and disinformation. The internet is also a fertile ground for hate speech, hacktivism, radicalisation and terrorist activities (ibid). It also happens that entertaining and private content overwhelms online public sphere. Bearing in mind that this article was written before the era of social media, we may agree with this statement, especially with the argument that this is due to the new media’s ability to supply entertainment having been expanded. In the

age of Instagram influencers, Youtubers and vloggers, this is more than ever true. In such an environment, political information and important issues are often neglected.

2.1.3 Social media logic and Self-mediatisation

Social media inhabit a different, though overlapping, logic than mass media—one that is often called social media logic or network media logic (Kalsnes, 2016, p. 26). Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, are creating new dynamics in information production, selection, distribution, consumption, and in the ways in which political communication is understood and measured. These new mechanisms researchers find to be governed by a *social media logic* (Dijck & Poell, 2013). As with news media logic, social media logic engages with the specific “norms, principles, and practices through which these platforms process information, news, and communication, and more generally, how they channel social traffic strategies, mechanisms, and economies—underpinning its dynamics” (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013, p. 5). Social media logic and mass media logic are intertwined (Kalsnes, 2016), likewise, the relationship between politics and media logic is characterised by “dynamic interactions and complex interdependencies along various levels and dimensions” (Strömbäck & Esser, 2009, p. 220). Klinger and Svensson (2014) have a similar opinion and also argue that social media logic is different, but overlaps, media logic. Kalsnes explains social media logic in relation to media logic (2016). While media logic explains how news is selected, interpreted and constructed, social media logic demonstrates “models that frame the ways in which the mechanisms of social media platform impact social interactions and information selection among its users” (Kalsnes, 2016, p. 44). In this context, author discuss the building blocks of social media logic in political communication, which consist of five high-level affordances: publishing, visibility, networking, connectivity, and segmentation (Kalsnes, 2016, p. 46).

Schulz argues that how new media function enabling users to interact and participate in social shaping is in contradiction with the media logic. On the other hand, he thinks that new media is compatible with the actor-centric mediatisation perspective (Schulz, 2014, p. 62). Strömbäck and Esser, in this context says: “An actor-centric mediatisation perspective rejects the idea that mediatisation consequences in politics are to be understood as causally affected by the media (“externalising” the reasons for political changes) and supports the idea that they arise from the needs of the mediatised system itself (internal reasons for borrowing media performances to fulfil the political need for public attention and acceptance)” (2014, p. 231).

Also, in this sense, some authors speak of “self-mediatisation” (e.g., Meyer, 2002). Evidence for actor-centric mediatisation comes from the campaign organisations, which have had to develop new strategies designed to bypass news media (Tedesco, 2011). As mentioned in the previous chapters, television ads have long been a “direct route to political persuasion” (D’Angelo, Büchel & Esser, 2014, p. 159) because the media did not have any influence on the content and construction of the ad. Today, besides television ads, we have online platforms which continually serve as a direct route to political persuasion. Barack Obama is one of the best examples of how strategists have used online platforms “with no filter” to communicate their messages with voters. YouTube was one of the best used channels in Obama’s campaign, and there is no TV channel or political TV ad that could produce and report so much material. Referring to their YouTube channel, David Plouffe, Obama’s campaign manager, said: “We had essentially created our own television network, only better, because we communicated directly *with no filter* to what would amount to 20 percent of the total number of votes we would need to win” (2010, p. 364, emphasis added cited in D’Angelo et al., 2014, p. 159).

However, self-mediatisation and the excessive use of public relations advisors, spin doctors and scripting campaigns, and of communication in general, often lead to cynicism and distrust in news media coverage (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Moreover, in the US and Western Europe, it led to a ‘démontage of politics’ (Kepplinger, 2002; Patterson, 1993). In this context, self-mediatisation is also related to the idea of self-personalisation in the online environment (McGregor et al., 2017; Metz et al., 2019). Metz et al. define self-personalisation in the online environment as “promoting politicians’ personal agenda, who by doing that increasingly profile themselves as independent from their associated parties on the web” (2019, p. 1). Self-mediatisation will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Obviously, further empirical research on “...how changes in media technologies and digitalisation influence the mediatisation of politics” (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014, p. 23) is needed. Especially, if we bear in mind D’Angelo et al.’s words that: “Determined efforts to manage and bypass the news media are in fact a sign that an advanced phase of mediatisation is taking place within an election system” (2014, p. 159). If we, in this context, think about the US President in office, Donald Trump, and how he used Twitter in his campaign in order to avoid “fake news”, where fake news is CNN and all other mainstream media who have been critical of him, we are witnessing the changes that the new media environment have brought -

the defeat of “media power” and the rise of the “era of minimal effects” of the traditional media. On the other hand, the effects of social media are on the rise.

Related to this phase and based on the notion that media logic has become part of the governing processes, is the concept of permanent campaigning (Blumenthal, 1982). Permanent campaigning has been a widely discussed topic for the last few years, especially in the context of new media (Ceccobelli, 2018; Giasson & Small, 2017; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Metz et al., 2019). These authors find that social media provide politicians with the infrastructure for constant communication with citizens. Moreover, politicians now have platforms on which they can communicate with citizens directly, they no longer need the traditional mass media to send their messages (Larsson, 2015). However, individuals and organisations have to adapt to social media logic and the new formats and communication patterns that social media impose. They have to learn how to adapt to these new platforms, “which impose limitations and constraints on communication processes leading to new forms of dependency and heteronomy” (Schulz, 2004, p. 96).

To conclude, the importance of the process of mediatisation in the new media environment is undeniable. The new media extend, or substitute for, non-mediated activities and traditional modes of communication. Like the old media, the new media amalgamate with various social activities which gives rise to new dimensions of mediatisation that need to be studied in more detail (ibid). Moreover, if political actors can now communicate without a filter, it is indeed important to examine how they adapt to social media logic, and in what way they self-mediatise online.

2.2 Personality politics and political communication

The personalisation of political communication, in the broadest sense, can be defined as the growing visibility of candidates in media reports, and the growing visibility of candidates in the strategic communication of parties (Grbeša, 2008, p. 15). It is a phenomenon that has been widely discussed and researched in recent decades. To understand the relevance of the phenomenon, the impact that it has on politics in general, and what the outcomes and consequences of the personalisation of political communication are, we need to go back and briefly discuss what political communication is, and how it has changed over time. Moreover, we need to focus on the broader concept of personality politics, which encompasses three

dimensions, one of which is the personalisation of political communication, the remaining two being the personalisation of power and the personalisation of electoral choice (ibid).

The roots and development of the political communication field

Political communication is an integral part of our everyday lives, likewise politics and communication. Chaffee gives a simple and frequently used definition of political communication, which suggests that political communication is the “role of communication in the political process” (1975, p. 15). Most of the time, most of the people do not even notice that political communication is an integral part of their lives, but it is there, and it is happening on a daily basis. Since political communication is bonded to our social environment, it is also shaped and constrained by that environment. Many societal changes, especially those related with the changes in media systems, thus have an impact on the shaping of political communication (Blumler & Kavanaugh, 1999, pp. 2010-2011). One of these processes is the mediatisation of politics. In the previous chapters we discussed the influence that media logic has on political logic, and how the media today shape politics. In this context, the role of television is stressed once again, and it probably will be again. Not only has mediatisation influenced developments in political communication, but also many other processes: the modernisation of society, individualisation, secularisation, economisation, aestheticization, increasing rationalisation (ibid).

Modern political communication research is thus an interdisciplinary field of study, drawing on concepts from communication, political science, journalism, sociology, psychology, history, rhetoric, and other fields (Kaid, 2004, p. xiii). While political communication is traced to the earliest classical studies of Aristotle and Plato, Nimmo and Sanders (1981), in their seminal *Handbook of Political Communication*, have traced the development of the field as an academic discipline in the latter half of the 20th century (ibid). In regard to the ensuing societal changes that occurred in the 20th century, Blumler and Kavanaugh differentiate among political communication in three political eras (1999). In the first era, political communication was subordinated to strong political institutions, political parties, namely, and collective beliefs (1999, p. 212). This period is also-called the “golden age of parties” (ibid). In this era, which occurred two decades after World War II, political communication was more substantial, and the media mostly had the role of mediators. Yet in this period, the citizens mostly did not pay much attention to issues, arguments and individual politicians. What was most important to them were their group identities and their attachments to certain collectives. Accordingly, they

tended to vote in relation to group-based loyalties. and not based on individual preferences. The second era, also known as the “era of television”, is characterised by the rise of the mass media, the dominance of television in the 1960s, and the gradual professionalisation of political communication through which the mass marketing of symbols and skills in mobilising large numbers of individuals had an important role (Blumler & Kavanaugh, 1999). In this period, the prevalence of short-term factors, such as news events, governments’ performances, specific issues and individual interests, over long-term factors, group identities, party identification, early socialisation, occurred (ibid).

Lastly, in the third era of political communication, in the age of media abundance, the media have a very important role in shaping everyday reality (ibid). Parallel to the importance and independence of the media, the process of the professionalisation of politics has been continuous in this era, with the focus on direct-marketing methods, the rise of electronic channels, and the advent of new opinion-assessment technologies (ibid). Besides the rise of “intensified professionalizing imperatives”, political communication, in this era, is also shaped by: “increased competitive pressures, anti-elitist populism, a process of “centrifugal diversification,” and changes in how people receive politics” (Blumler & Kavanaugh, 1999, p. 209). These authors perfectly describe this era by saying: “To politicians, the third-age media system must look like a hydra-headed beast, the many mouths of which are continually clamouring to be fed. When something happens, they are expected to tell the media what they are going to do about it well before they can be fully informed them-selves” (1999, p. 213).

Changes in this third era were happening tremendously fast, with growing numbers of TV channels and other media outlets all seeking fresh information and profit. In this era, computers came into use and the internet became widely spread, associating this era with the digital era. In recent studies, a fourth era of political communication is proposed, which is situated in the context of social media and begins from the 2010s onwards (Enli, 2017). The “era of social media” will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.3, which is devoted to social media and political communication.

We have briefly discussed how the field of political communication was changing in parallel with major societal changes in the 20th and 21st century. In the next section, the concept of personality politics, as one of the recurring phenomena, i.e., the “consequences” of the changing social and, particularly, the media environment, will be discussed.

Personality politics

In the last few decades, personalisation has often been described as a key characteristic of contemporary politics and political communication (Mughan, 2000; Langer & Sagarzazu, 2018; Poguntke & Webb 2005; van Aelst et al. 2012). Until now there have been many studies that have tried to define the concept of the personalisation of politics (Adam & Maier, 2010; Karvonen, 2009; Langer, 2011; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; Van Aelst et al., 2012; Mancini 2011). However, a single definition has not been found, only an agreement that the personalisation of politics is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Authors do not even agree about the importance and origins of the personalisation of politics. So, what is the personalisation of politics? What are the origins of personalisation, and why is it important for political science, and why study it in the context of social media? Let us start with the superficial definition that is related to the roots of the words persona(lisation) – persona(lism) which always underscores the centrality of the person as the primary locus of investigation, and tends to regard the person as the ultimate explanatory principle of all reality. Derived from this definition, which is taken from the *Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy*, we can rely on Karvonen’s definition of personalisation, which explains that the core of the hypothesis of the personalisation of politics is a notion that individual candidates became more prominent at the expense of parties and collective identities (Karvonen, 2010, p. 4). Almost the same definition is given in a recent work by Langer and Sagarzazu: “The process of personalisation is understood as an increase over time in the centrality and autonomy of individual politicians at the expense of collective institutions (parties, cabinets and parliaments)” (2018, p. 472). Another important factor that is at the core of the definition of the concept, and which explains the reasoning behind the phenomenon, is the citizens’ desire, need, or even demand, for the presentation of complex political issues and distant governments through flesh and blood persons, so that they can connect more easily with them (Sorauf, 1988, pp. 504-5, in Blondel & Thiebault, 2010, p. 20). Langer and Sagarzazu further say that personalisation can affect the role of individuals in government, in their voting behaviour, in their campaign communication, and in their media coverage, with each of these dimensions potentially reinforcing the others (2018, p. 472).

It can be said that personality politics is divided into three dimensions: the personalisation of power, the personalisation of political communication, and the personalisation of electoral choices (Grbesa, 2010). The personalisation of power is defined as a greater concentration of power in the hands of leaders. This concept is widely researched in the works of Poguntke and

Webb that are related to the concept of the “Presidentialisation” of politics, in which these authors claim that, today, many parliamentary systems are beginning to look like presidential systems in their actual practice, without, in most cases, changing their regime-type, with prime ministers who have “presidentialised” their prime ministerial functions (2005). In their view, “Presidentialization denominates a process by which regimes are becoming more presidential” (Poguntke & Webb, 2005, p. 1). Secondly, the personalisation of political communication is acclaimed as the growing visibility of candidates in the media coverage of politics, and the growing visibility of candidates in the strategic communication of parties (Grbeša, 2010; Langer, 2010, 2011; Holtz-Bacha, Van Zoonen & Langer, 2014). The third, related, concept, is studied in the voting behaviour field, and it explores the role of political actors on voters’ electoral choices, stating that individual politicians can have an impact on voters’ electoral choices (Bean & Mughan, 1989; Kaase, 1994; Kasapović, 2004; King, 2002).

In the next section, something about the importance and origins of the personalisation of politics will be said, while the second dimension of personality politics, the personalisation of political communication, will be the focus of this thesis.

Even though personalisation thesis has, in theory, been discussed a lot without any clear agreement being reached among scholars, McAllister notices that, in practice, the personalisation thesis is very clear (2015, p. 337). He brings four main arguments for this statement: first, he finds that parties themselves fancy putting leaders to the front as channels of partisan communication, because voters can much more easily identify with, and recognise, a person than with a party. Secondly, voters themselves like the personalisation of politics because it is easier to hold a person accountable for a government’s actions, rather than an abstract entity, such as a political party (ibid; see also Langer, 2010). Additionally, political actors themselves use personalisation as a strategy through which to strengthen their position in the political process. The fourth feature that McAllister notes relates to the visual media, which, in his opinion, foster personalisation, because persons are visually more appealing to the viewer (2015). To underline this, the author explains that the personalisation of politics is unquestionably a phenomenon because it satisfies everyone in the political process.

While some scholars find that the personalisation of politics is marginal, and more of an anecdotal phenomenon, or a phenomenon that is characterised by its fluctuations, which depend on a leader’s personality and on the political circumstances (Kasapović, 2004; King, 2002;

Rahat & Sheaffer 2007; Wilke & Reinemann 2001), others think it is relevant phenomenon with the potential to influence the political process in recent decades (Grbeša 2008; Holtz-Bacha, Langer, & Merkle, 2014; Karvonen, 2010; Swanson & Mancini, 1996; Wattenberg, 1991). In his comprehensive study of the personalisation of politics, analysing an extensive number of articles and books dedicated to this concept, Karvonen (2010, p. 4), similarly to McAllistar (2015), concludes that personalisation is a potentially important phenomenon that can affect important parts of the political process that are related to institutions, voting behaviour and the media presentation of politics. Langer and Sagarzazu (2018, p. 472) also explain why personalisation is important for the political process, and why it raises strong normative concerns. They argue that personalisation is important because of its “potential impact on the balance of power within the executive and between the executive and the legislature, on the role of political parties, on the rationality of electoral behaviour, and on the quality of media coverage and therefore on citizens’ ability to keep their representatives accountable” (ibid; see also Adam & Maier 2010; Langer 2011).

At the same time, their positions on the origins of the personalisation of politics are similar, some scholars think that personalisation is as old as politics itself (for instance Karvonen, 2010), others (for instance Holtz-Bacha et al, 2014) think it is a phenomenon related to contemporary democracies. Karvonen (2010) in his book tries to challenge all dimensions of the phenomenon, starting with the intention to discern the origins of the personalisation of politics. Karvonen obviously advocates the former thesis, saying that politics, in its pre-democratic forms, was much more personalised than it is today (2010, p. 3). In this context, he reminds us of Max Weber’s charismatic authority, as one of the three main forms of political legitimacy. Rahat and Sheaffer also recall Weber’s words relating to the development of modern democracy, with the switch between the rule of law, based on legal-rational grounds, and the rule of man, based on traditional and especially personal-charismatic grounds (Weber, 1947, 1958, in Rahat & Sheaffer, 2017, p. 66). As already mentioned, Poguntke and Webb (2005, p. 21), who talk about the “Presidentialisation” of politics, take a similar position. Poguntke and Webb, in this context, stress the historical perspective of the “Presidentialisation” of politics, criticising those who claim that there is evidence of the recent development of the phenomenon, but acknowledging the development of the phenomenon in recent decades, especially with the focus on specific leaders such as Tony Blair in the UK, Gerhard Shroeder and Angela Merkel in Germany, Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands (2005). Going back to the concept of the personalisation of politics itself, Holtz-Bacha, Langer and Merkle find that in recent decades,

attention to the phenomenon of the personalisation of politics has significantly grown, and they have suggested a new development (2014, p. 153).

2.2.1 Key drivers of personality politics

Holtz-Bacha, Langer and Merkle (2014) identify several factors as key drivers of personalisation: 1. the changing media environment, 2. the modernisation of society, and 3. changes in the political system. These authors discuss the notions that the proliferation of television and the changing media market, the weakening of the traditional social ties, thus increased the process of individualisation, which has brought about many uncertainties, the growth in the numbers of unreliable voters, an inability to solve political problems at the institutional level, all logically lead to more personalised politics. They argue that “retreating to general and uncontroversial issues, emphasising emotional appeals and focusing on individual politicians indeed seems to be a rational strategy for political actors” (2014, p. 154).

1) The modernisation of society

When we are talking about the modernisation of society, in most cases we refer to the processes that have occurred since 1945 in countries which have enjoyed unbroken, competitive, democratic rule, or which have made a successful transition since then (Web & Farrel, 2000). Poguntke and Webb (2005) call these countries “modern democracies”, while new democracies are usually referred to as “consolidating”, “evolving” or “developing” democracies (Čular, 2005). The process of modernisation is important in understanding the whole reasoning that lies behind the concept of the personalisation of politics, because modernisation, in its core definition, contains the idea that traditional social and political cleavages are weakening, while individual, personal and issue cues are growing, meaning that group identity and devotion to the group are no longer decisive factors in political behaviour. Halman thus says: “People’s values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour are now based increasingly on personal choice and are less dependent on tradition and social institutions” (2007, p. 314). Similarly, Swanson and Mancini talk about the dissolution of traditional social ties and the weakening of traditional group identities (class, religious, ethnic), giving way to greater individualism (1996, p. 9). In this context, Blondel and Thiébault say that personalisation is a result of the process of modernisation:

“with the spread of education, reactions of citizens were becoming more independent from the social groups to which they had been attached, especially if class was viewed as the main “cleavage,” but even where other cleavages, such as those based on religious

or regional appartenance, had a prominent place. Individuals seemed to count rather more, with all their characteristics and not merely with those characteristics binding them to a group often, perhaps typically, not even their own choosing” (2010, pp. 1–2).

How has this happened? Why has group loyalty declined, and how did individuals become more important than groups? What has caused the increasing social complexity and fragmentation? Many authors gave similar answers, finding reasons and causes for these changes in: rising levels of education, the emergence of alternative sources of political information and greater access to information, which is enabled primarily by the expansion of the mass media, the fragmentation of life spaces and the fragmentation of lifestyles, growing affluence, the growing use of communication technologies, and the “information revolution” (see Dalton, 2002; Halman, 2007). Furthermore, in Halmans’ words, these changes have resulted in expanding social welfare networks, increasing geographic, economic and social mobility, the specialisation of job-related knowledge and professionalisation (2007, p. 314). He continues by saying that in such a new social constellation, individuals increasingly develop their own values and norms that do not necessarily correspond to traditional ones.

Karvonen thus finds that political parties were important in industrial societies because they reflected sharp differences between socio-economic and cultural groups in those societies (2010, p. 3). However, these fundamental social structures have changed and devotion to the group and group identity has declined, and these were thus no longer decisive factors in political behaviour and the electoral preferences of voters (ibid). As already mentioned, these changes in voters’ political behaviour were related to broader changes in society and to changes in how we lived our lives. In this context, along with the process of the modernisation of society (Dalton, 2002), Swanson and Mancini (1996) focus on the socio-economic and technological modernisation of society, Bauman talks about the individualisation of social life (2001), Hallin and Mancini (2004) emphasise the concept of secularisation in society, explaining how the institutions that structured the “old” political order – church, trade unions, parties – have lost their ability to hegemonize the course of a citizen’s community life. Furthermore, as Grbeša (2008, p. 22) sums up: The “old” political cues that stem from a sense of belonging to a certain social group, or affiliation with a certain social institution have now been complemented - if not replaced – by the “new” cues. The salience of ideology has been diminishing, and the contemporary voter has become an “issue voter”, while politics has become “issue politics”.

As a response to these changes, Dalton writes that a new style of citizen politics should include a more fluid and volatile pattern of party alignment, because past class and religious cleavages are becoming less important, while the beliefs and values of each individual are becoming more important when it comes to voting decisions (2002, p. 170). In other words, belonging to a group, either religious, political, or any other group, no longer has an impact on the voting decisions of the individual citizen. Citizens are now deciding for whom they will vote according to their own individual preferences and interests, and not based on the traditional social attachments and group identities. Consequently, these changes have led to progressive erosion of cleavage politics, and an apparent decline in long-term partisan commitments (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000).

2) The changing media environment – The role of television

Changes in the media environment have already been discussed, to some extent, in the previous sections in the context of the mediatisation of politics and the different eras of political communication. We have already seen that the media, at the beginning, had a role as the pure mediators or transmitters of the information that politicians would give to them. In this period, media was attached to, and often financed by, different social and political group organisations. The media later gained independence and started developing their own logic, media logic. With the advent of television, media logic was becoming more and more important in shaping everyday lives. It is suggested that media logic had specifically influenced politics, and the ways in which politics is conducted and perceived among people. In these processes, scholars (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Entman & Herbst, 2001) most often talk about the commercialisation of the media market and changes in news production that commercialisation brought. Mazzoleni and Schulz say that: “In the late 1970s, public television monopolies in many countries began to be challenged by newly born local, private, community, and mostly commercial radio and television channels that familiarised the domestic audiences with alternative and often successful news offerings” (1999, p. 259).

As was mentioned in relation to the third era of political communication, politicians had to feed the beast with many heads, and journalists had to produce news from hour to hour, and gain profit from it. To attract the viewership, political news has had to be presented in an attractive, and sometimes even entertaining, way. In this period, new media formats for covering politics emerged. To adopt and adapt to these changes, politicians started using communication and marketing specialists. The role of the individual politician was growing at the expense of

political parties. In the relationship between politics and media, politics had to be restyled. In this context, Mancini and Swanson argue that: “the format of television favours personalisation for formal and structural reasons. Formally, the medium favours the representation of human figures over complex institutions, such as political parties, while, structurally, the medium’s commercial logic favours offering access to all candidates who can pay the cost of advertising, passing over the parties” (1996, p. 13).

Similarly, Rahat and Kenig give four reasons that explain why television is prone to focusing on individual politicians: the first is the visual nature of the medium, which means that it is much easier to present flesh and blood humans than abstract ideas and complex programs (2018). The second refers to the fact that viewers can more easily identify with a person than with the idea. The third is that it is easier for parties to line up behind their leaders, instead of programs and abstract ideas, and, fourthly, voters’ can much more easily hold accountable an individual politician, rather than abstract entities, such as parties, governments, parliament (2018, pp. 127-8).

Corner and Pels wrote about the media and the restyling of politics with several contributors (2003). These authors explain that voters no longer “buy’ inclusive ideological packages or tried-and-trusted party brands, but they are still mobilisable around strings of single issues and around the ‘singular’ political personalities who represent these issues in a distinctive manner” (2003, p. 2). Pels continues by saying that, in the post-ideological television age, the synergy between the mass media and an increasingly professionalised politics has increasingly blurred the classical oppositions between left and right, mixing the political substance and political form, and putting into focus political personalities and their political style, instead of programmatically-based and party-aligned forms of political representation (Pels, 2003, p. 45). In the introduction to their book, the authors describe how “style, appearance, and personality” became the focus of modern mediated politics, diminishing the difference between politics and entertainment, political leadership and media celebrity (2003, p. 2). Similarly, McAllister links television to the personalisation of politics: “For television political leaders represent convenient visual shortcut to capture and retain the viewer’s attention, particularly if the information overlaps with the leader’s personality” (2007, p. 579). Moreover, Langer argues: “Qualities such as communication skills and charisma, although certainly not new in the evaluation of leaders, have experienced a redefinition in public discourse” (2010, p. 68). The expectation is now for leaders to be more informal, conversational, at ease in the confessional

mode, and capable of being emotionally reflective and open (ibid). It follows therefore that “the daily TV news, current affairs programmes and chat shows turn political actors into media regulars whose familiar personae are developed in a continuous soap-like narrative” (Marshall, 1997, p. 229; see also van Zoonen, 2005). Van Zoonen (2005, p. 111) likewise explains how many structural and ideological factors influence the utilisation of soap opera discourse in media reporting. She says that time pressure and framing routines, news values and organisational routines, together with journalists’ views on politics as soap drive negative news coverage presented in soap-like narrative (ibid).

Moreover, to describe a new *modus operandi*, in which style has become some kind of a bridge between emotions and rationale, something that appears to bring politics closer to the citizens, a new term has been coined: “televsual audience democracy” (Van Zoonen, 2005, p. 51). Since television is in general also accused of being biased towards emotions, conflicts, drama, scandal, incidents, personalities, it is not surprising to find that politics is presented in the same frames. However, Karvonen finds that with the role of new communications technology is growing, while the predominance of television slowly started fading (2010). He thinks that for the process of personalisation that might be even encouraging, since new communication technology might work so to accelerate personalisation (2010, p. 4). Likewise, there are some authors who think that political actors had more benefits before television made them appear to be people from our living room, someone that we have a feeling that we know, that he or she is familiar to us (Meyrowitz, 1985). The new online media have made a step forward in this direction, minimising even more the distance between the audience and the performer, i.e., by bringing politics closer to citizens, politicians’ aura of greatness is becoming smaller and smaller. If we use an analogy of the cathedral, we might say that the closer we get to the cathedral, the bigger the cathedral, the closer we get to politicians (or they to us), the smaller they get.

In the last two decades many studies have researched television as the main channel of personalisation (Blondel & Thiébault, 2010; Curtice & Hunjan, 2011; Kaase, 1994; Plasser & Lengaur, 2009; Schütz, 2008; Van Aelst et al, 2012). Maybe the best example to demonstrate “the loss of politicians’ aura” is Britain’s actual Prime Minister in a Tory government, Boris Johnson, who was a key figure in the *Leave campaign* that resulted in Great Britain leaving the

European Union.³ A day after the Brexit referendum, an angry crowd gathered in front of his home, yelling “Shame on you, Boris”, while some individuals came so close to him that it looked as if they would have physically attacked him if numerous policemen had not been there (BBC.com, 2016, June 24). There are certainly many other examples that can show how, today, we do not have any barriers against politicians, we behave with them as we would with a neighbour who had done something that we didn’t like, and then we came to the front of his house, yelled, and even got into his personal space. This example of Boris Johnson makes us ask: are we taking personal space from politicians? The discussion about the right to privacy for people who are doing “public” jobs and who are paid by that public, is certainly very old one in celebrity studies, but the same question is asked in political science. More will be said on that issue in the following sections.

The media industry has undergone tremendous changes in recent decades. These changes are heavily influenced by the technological and digital development of communication platforms. These changes followed the “industrial and financial interests of the media and telecommunication trusts [that] are prompting a revolution in the conventional mass media. The adjustment by the news media and journalism to the new scenarios is progressing at different speeds in different national and continental contexts” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 259). One of the major changes in the media environment is definitely a weakening of the traditional editorial role and the critical functions of the media, followed by the fading perception of the journalists as watchdogs (Bardoel, 1996). Interactive communication, “citizen-journalism”, the development of online media, the rapid spread of social media and other concepts that have developed in parallel to the advent of online platforms and that have forced traditional media to change and to adapt. In this ruthless fight for profit and viewership, it seems that everyone has found a piece of the cake for themselves. Even the print media, whose “death” has been announced several times already, the first time being when the radio appeared, is still alive.

3) Changes and differences in political systems

According to Langer and Holtz-Bacha (2014), the third often mentioned driver of the personalisation of politics is the differences in political systems. There is, nonetheless, a

³ Boris Johnson was the Minister of Foreign Affairs when Brexit was happening. Before that, he was Mayor of London and he was very popular at that time. He was elected as Prime Minister after the resignation of Theresa May, who inherited from David Cameron the task of finishing negotiations with the EU about leaving the Union. However, three years later, the agreement is still not completed. The referendum on Brexit was held on June 23 2016. The outcome of the referendum was 51.8% voted for an exit, against 48.2% who voted to remain.

consensus that institutions are key to explaining variations in the degree of personalisation (Karvonen, 2010; Kriesi, 2011; Mughan, 2000; Poguntke & Webb, 2005; van Aelst et al., 2012). In this context, Rahat and Kenig talk about institutional personalisation, which they define as “the adoption of rules, mechanisms, and institutions that put greater emphasis on the individual politician than on political groups and parties” (2018, p. 138). Rahat and Sheaffer, in their longitudinal study of personalisation in Israel, showed that a growing degree of media personalisation is mainly driven by institutional changes in the political system (2007). They confirmed Wolfsfeld’s PMP model, according to which a political change (democratising candidate selection methods) initiates a change in the way the media cover politics, which then leads to a change in politicians’ behaviour (2007, p. 77), but also in voters’ electoral behaviour (Langer & Sagarzazu, 2018). Kriesi (2011) came to similar conclusions in his study, which was conducted in six European countries, and in which he compared election coverage over time and found significant country differences in the degree of personalised coverage. He attributed these differences to the “institutional arrangements of the respective political systems, with the overall regime type and the electoral system accounting for most of the differences” (2011, p. 841).

In his study on the personalisation of politics in Australia at a local level, McAllister also emphasises the role of the electoral system (2015, p. 338). He finds that electoral systems that are candidate-centred, enable candidates to emphasise personal service, while, in party-centred systems, parties have more control over the selection and nomination of candidates. The most candidate-centred systems, he remarks, are that of the US, followed by Australia, Ireland and Switzerland (Dalton, Farrell & McAllistar, 2011 in McAllistar, 2015, p. 338). Kaleb (1992) supports this notion, saying that the “demise of political parties,” in the American party system, gives rise to candidate-centred and highly personalised campaigns that consequently depend on support by mass media. Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999, p. 256) find that, in European parliamentary systems, individual politicians in most cases need the support of a political party organisation if they want to be elected, while, in the American Presidential system, they need media more than a party. Yet Renwick and Pilet claim that there is: “good evidence for thinking that European electoral systems are undergoing a gradual process of personalisation. This trend is grounded in voters’ growing disengagement from traditional party politics and their desire for more individualised forms of political expression and representation” (2011, p. 28). Hermans and Vergeer (2012) studied candidates’ communication strategies in the 2009 European parliament elections, and they revealed that politicians from post-communist

countries pursued more personalised communication than the politicians from Western countries. They measured personalised communication through counting references about their political persona and work in politics, about private life, namely, family life and preferences in personalised communication, which were manifested in the extent to which they revealed information about their work in politics, their family life and their private preferences (ibid).

To conclude, the personalisation of politics, and particularly political communication, is influenced by many changes in the social environment. Some of these changes act as amplifiers or “key drivers” of personalisation (Langer & Holtz-Bacha, 2014): changes in the media environment, changes in the political system and the modernisation of society.

This section has discussed how politics have become personalised, and in the next section how politics is being privatised and popularised and brought closer to citizens will be discussed.

2.2.2 The privatisation of politics

Looking at the general trend in today’s democracies, it is possible to say that modern politicians’ private lives are being followed by the general public as they are considered increasingly interesting and newsworthy (Ciagli & Mazzoni, 2014, p. 450). McAllister states that: “Barack Obama’s family history received more attention during the 2008 Presidential election campaign than any US Presidential candidate in history, while public interest in Nicholas Sarkozy’s marriage to Carla Bruni in 2008 broke a long-standing French taboo about public discussion of the private lives of Presidents” (2015, p. 337).

In recent French Presidential elections, not only the French media, but also the world’s leading media, were obsessed with the private life of Emanuel Macron, the current President, and his 25 years older wife, Brigitte Macron. A similar situation was witnessed in Canada, where Justin Trudeau and his family appeared on both the traditional and social media platforms as our “neighbours”. Even one of the most powerful women in the world, Angela Merkel, discovered some private cues, like the recipe for her potatoe soup (Huggler, 2017, August 24). This all supports the idea that modern political leaders are now fully regarded as celebrities (Campus, 2010; Kellner, 2009; Marshall, 1997; Stanyer, 2012; West & Orman, 2003; Wheeler, 2013, 2014). As a result, while citizens have detailed knowledge of politicians’ private stories, they

might not be nearly as knowledgeable about their ‘political behaviours’, as manifested in the petitions they endorse, their vote choices, etc. (Ciagli & Mazzoni, 2014, p. 450).

The focus of this research is on the concept “privatisation of politicians” (Holtz-Bacha, 2004; Roncarolo, 2004) or the “politicization of private persona” (Langer, 2006, 2010). Both terms describe, broadly speaking, the infiltration of cues from the private lives of politicians into politics. Both concepts are grounded on the thesis that the private has irretrievably penetrated the political. In this respect, Holtz-Bacha (2004, pp. 49-50) argues that privatisation may have different goals: humanisation, simplification and distraction, emotionalization, and the striving for a celebrity status. Humanisation refers to the efforts of political actors to appear to be “one of us”, as simple and ordinary citizens. Simplification and distraction mean that sometimes they oversimplify issues and try to distract us from the important issues. Emotionalization is becoming an ever-stronger weapon in political communication. Today, it is impossible to lead politics without drawing emotions into it. Lastly, striving for celebrity status means that politicians sometimes want to appear to be celebrities, they do things that celebrities do, they use elements from their private lives, and they appear with real celebrities, hoping that their popularity will be transferred onto them as well (see Street, 2004).

Grbeša finds that the trend to the “privatisation” of politics manifests itself in many other ways. For instance, the visibility of politicians’ families and their importance in constructing a politicians’ public image, until recently typically linked to American political culture (such as the unavoidable role of the “first lady”) seems to be taking root in Europe as well (Grbeša, 2008, p. 59). As an example, Grbeša brings the youngest of Blair’s children, his son, Leo; Doris Schröder-Kopf, the wife of the former Prime Minister Gerhard Schröder, who is a famous public figure in Germany, while the Italian public is very well acquainted with Berlusconi’s Mama Rosa (ibid). Street (2003, p. 92) brings the example from the UK where *The Mirror* revealed that Tony Blair wears Calvin Klein underpants, and from Germany, where the German media were discussing whether Gerhard Schroder dyes his hair or not. As Street observes: “The point here is not whether indeed the Chancellor is going grey, but that it matters what people think about his hair” (2003, p. 92).

Many authors (Langer, 2010; Grbeša, 2009; Šimunjak, 2017) have discussed the boundaries between the private and the public in politics, and most of them have agreed that the relationship between privacy and publicity are changing in the light of recent developments in

communication technology (Jurgenson & Rey, 2012, p. 292). Ford offers a model in which she distinguishes three areas: privacy (controlled by the individual), publicity (completely open and uncontrolled) and the grey area in between these two poles in which information is partially controlled by the individual to whom it pertains (2011, p. 560). Jurgenson and Rey (2012) have criticised her model, saying that it is almost impossible to look at publicity and privacy as completely different concepts, explaining that these two concepts are, today, overlapping. While Ford advocates a continuum model, Jurgenson and Rey argue that “privacy and publicity produce a dialectic – that each concept implies the other” (2012, p. 289). Relying on these ideas, the focus of further discussions on this topic should be on the concept of intimacy. Although many authors, such as Meyrowitz (1985) and Thompson, (2000) talk about the typical 'unfamiliar familiarity' or asymmetrical 'intimacy at a distance' which characterises the 'parasocial' relationship between media celebrities and their audiences, they still talk only in the context of blurring private and public personae, while it seems that intimacy should be discussed as a completely new category.

Furthermore, the “private” is apparent in other shapes, or perhaps it is better to say that it is apparent in less obvious shapes. Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha (2000, p. 55) argue that “private discourse has irreversibly infiltrated the political persona.” They notice that “politicians speak from political positions but do so in a private language which then “personalises”, i.e., privatizes the discourse” (ibid). The infiltration of private cues into political discourse will be the focal point of further research in this thesis. Many discussions have focused on intended and unintended private cues in political discourse. Langer explains: Once we know that actors in the process of building politician’s public image are “who they are, the version(s) of their ‘true selves’ put forward for public consumption, and the mediated version constructed by, and presented in, the media” (2006, p. 35). Following, we ask what the balance is, and what the dynamics between the political and the private are when it comes to shaping candidates’ public images (Grbeša, 2010).

In the study on the Italian tabloid press during Mario Monti’s government, Boni (2008) stresses the critical importance of understanding “whether the entertainment media’s attention to politicians’ private lives is because ‘the interaction between media and politics has generated media spectacularization and political personalization’” (Boni, 2008, p. 50 in Ciagli and Mazzoni, 2014, p. 456), or whether it is due to the attempts to maximise visibility and popularity that are regularly made by politicians (Ciagli & Mazzoni, 2014, p. 456). Yet, Ciaglia and

Mazzoni stress that the leaders they investigated, Monti and Berlusconi, in the first place, are well aware that being visible in the gossip press means sacrificing any private life (ibid). Having said that, it is most obvious how studying the privatisation of politics on social media, where political actors control their presentation, could serve as a most valuable source for revealing “attempts to maximize visibility and popularity that are regularly made by politicians” (ibid). Thompson noted the same thing, explaining that the extent to which politicians’ private sphere is publicly known is not only because of the media logic and the media’s hunger for news about the private lives’ of politicians, which will sell more copies of the newspaper, but also depends on the degree of willingness of the politicians themselves to allow their extra-institutional life to be made public (Thompson, 2000). In this context, Corner brings a very clear model of overlaps between the private, the public and the political (Corner, 2003, p. 73). However, the model misses the area where the political, the private and the public overlap. The new model would thus have a space where elements of private life used as a strategy for political processes that are followed as a result of the interest of the media, meet and form a new sphere.

2.2.3 Celebrity politics - a marriage of political, private and popular

West and Orman write: “Since the turn of twenty-first century, the signs have been clear that the American political system has changed into a celebrity regime in which politicians are subjected to Hollywood-style tabloid coverage and celebrities are treated as political actors. It is all part of entertaining America. No longer does the argument of whether pop culture influences political change or vice versa matter. Politics is pop culture” (2003, p. x). Supporting this argument, Pels cites the words of one of the most well-known celebrity politicians, the controversial and eccentric Pim Fortuyn, who said: “Politics is also play-acting, a form of theatre. People want to hear a good story and then go to sleep” (Camps, 2001 in Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 47).

Following, in the last two decades, the literature on pop politics and celebrity politics has been growing (Corner & Pels, 2003; Marshall, 1997; Mukherjee, 2004; Street, Inthorn & Scott, 2012; Van Zoonen, 2006; Weiskel, 2005; West & Orman, 2003). The results of numerous studies have supported the assumption that politicians today are adopting the codes and techniques of mass entertainment and show business to maximise their popularity (Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001; Riegert, 2007; Street, 1997, 2004; Zaller, 2003; West & Orman, 2003). ‘t Hart and Tindall believe that “contemporary politicians are inexorably drawn into the media realm and – the

leader at least – increasingly adopts the role of the celebrity” (2010, p. 235). Moreover, John Street (1997, p. 60) observes that politics is very similar to popular culture, because, for politicians, politics is about creating an “audience”, a people who will laugh at their jokes, understand their fears and share their hopes. Van Zoonen even draws an analogy between the fan community and the political community, while presenting the relationship of fan-to-star and citizen-to-politician as equivalent (van Zoonen, 2005). Street claims that politicians “associate themselves with popular culture and its icons, in the hope that some of the popularity will rub off” (1997, p. 48). Van Zoonen (2005) finds that politicians must catch the interest of the average citizen and communicate according to the culture of the time: rather than focusing on erasing entertainment from politics, one should ask how to entertain the citizen to develop political citizenship. Furthermore, Langer says that: “Likewise, personal “human” qualities, such as being likable and in touch, which are read at least partly from personal details such as family life and leisure preferences, have become key elements in the media’s analysis of leaders’ popularity (or lack thereof) and in the assessment of their suitability for twenty-first-century leadership” (2010, p. 68).

Many politicians share this sentiment. Some very well-known early examples of implementing these strategies in political communication and political marketing, back in the 1990’s, are Bill Clinton’s appearance on MTV in *The Arsenio Hall Show*, in which he played the saxophone, or, in Eastern Europe, Boris Yeltsin, in his 1996 Presidential campaign, in which he called in a parade of celebrities (Street, 1997, p. 15). Street finds that his appearance on the show reflected his careful study of performers in order to create an emotional connection with the audience (ibid). In the 1980’s, we remember the American President, Ronald Reagan, who used the popularity of numerous celebrities in his campaign. It is especially interesting to mention that when, in his re-election campaign, in one of his campaign speeches, he intentionally mentioned Bruce Springsteen to make voters believe that Springsteen endorsed him, although Springsteen did not (in Street 1997, p. 15). Well-known for managing politics using popular culture techniques is the former leader of the Labour Party in Great Britain, Neil Kinnock, who recognised how political advertising is like commercial advertising. Relying on the idea that they must sell Kinnock like any other product, his team filmed video spots that were a symbiosis of popular film and political image, and this was captured in a series of “sentimental memories, soft-focused shots and warm endorsements” (Street 1997, p. 15). Moreover, ‘t Hart and Tindall note: “Democratic politics, like marketing has always been about persuasion; but these days the techniques used in persuading publics of the merits of certain ideas, parties and people have

become almost indistinguishable from those used in “branding” firms, products and indeed stars” (2010, p. 259). Street (1997) reveals that this “new” intimacy is, rather, not new, but has been present in more latent forms. As evidence for this argument, he recalls how the Prime Minister Harold Wilson, in 1965, suggested the Beatles for the MBE (Member of the British Empire).

Many authors have made an effort to classify celebrity politics under different categories, stressing the importance of different shapes and sizes of celebrity politics (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2010; Thrall et al., 2008; Street, 2004; Van Zoonen, 2005, West & Orman, 2003). Street distinguishes between the celebrity politician who is a traditional politician who engages “with the world of popular culture in order to advance their pre-established political functions and goals”, and the celebrity politician, who is an ‘entertainer who pronounces on politics and claims the right to represent people and causes, but who does so without seeking or acquiring elected office” (2004, pp. 437-439). ‘t Hart and Tindall (2010, p. 323) suggest four categories of celebrity involvement in politics: celebrity advocates, celebrity endorsers, celebrity politicians and politician-turned-celebrity. Celebrity advocates are celebrities who fight for some political issues, such as Bono Vox or Angelina Jolie. Recently, the best-known celebrity endorser would be Oprah Winfrey, who actively campaigned for Barack Obama. The last two categories: celebrity politician and politician celebrity, in ‘t Hart and Tindall’s classification, overlap with Street’s definition of, and differentiation between, celebrity politicians. The first category is defined as “celebrities who go beyond one-issue politics and become office seekers, such as are the most cited examples Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger”, and the second category relates to established politicians who enter the sphere of celebrity (ibid). ‘t Hart and Tindall say that politician celebrities know how to communicate and how to adjust to changing media environment. They find that such politician attempts to personalise or ‘brand’ their leadership (ibid). In this context, Marshall writes: “In politics, a leader must somehow embody the sentiments of the party, the people, and the state. In the realm of entertainment, a celebrity must somehow embody the sentiments of an audience” (1997, p. 203). Marshall further explains that the similarities in these relationships lie in the “affective function” or emotional response – “the feelings and meanings that constitute them and motivate actions that follow from them” (ibid). For the purpose of this research, Street’s second category will serve as a valuable frame for the examined cases, because I will try to reveal the strategies and techniques that the selected political leaders use on social media in order to personalise or ‘brand’ their leadership.

According to Van Zoonen (2005), one of the most worrying issues in today's democracies is that there is too big a distance between the representatives and the represented, and this is a breeding ground for a crisis that goes much further than straightforward political conflict. Coleman talks about the problem of representation where politicians are not very well connected to the people, and where their mode of representation is more preaching than sharing (2003, p. 33). Politics has to be connected to the everyday culture of its citizens; otherwise it becomes an "alien sphere, occupied by strangers no one cares and bothers about" (Van Zoonen, 2005, p. 3). Van Zoonen explains that most people have to do politics in their leisure time, and leisure is a highly competitive sector in which politics has to fight for attention with magazines, books, comics, sports, comedies, soap operas, gossip, movies, popular music, fandom, romantic genres or quiz shows (2004, pp. 39-40). Visiting a political demonstration in one's leisure time is in conflict with going out with friends, or to the gym (ibid).

Many authors thus find that politicians should show their other side of the persona, they should appear to be ordinary people in order to get closer to the citizens (Holtz-Bacha, 2004; Van Zoonen, 2005). Van Zoonen (2005, p. 91), claims that political leaders must make their family life public to strengthen their persona and their integrity, because it 'adds a sense of them being modern men/women'. She further advocates a marriage between popular culture and politics, saying that one has to accept the changes that occurred in society with the ubiquity of television, and instead of fighting against these changes, we have to find a way to incorporate popular culture into politics and *vice versa* (2005, p. 15). Luthar (2010, p. 695) notes that politicians are required to perform a personalised self to the public and need to convince us that this self-operated self is compatible with the political demands that are placed upon it. Luthar further believes that the "projection of an optimal political self will demand the attention of popular values" (ibid).

Barnhurst emphasises and explains that "politics occurs for many people in our "media surround"; the forms, types, places and contexts in which media are inserted into our lives" (1998, p. 212). Street also highlights the importance of the conditions and context, and, moreover, of the type of popular culture and the type of political system, in combining passion, politics and popularity (1997). This means that the connections and manifestations of popular culture and politics will be different in different countries in different contexts. Hence, Ciaglia and Mazzoni (2014), in their research on pop-politics in times of crisis, explored Italian tabloid press during Mario Monti's government, showing the difference in tabloid coverage of the

personal lives of two completely diverse politicians, Mario Monti and Silvio Berlusconi, where Berlusconi was central figure in numerous scandals relating to his personal life, while Monti was presented completely differently, as a professional and ordinary person. The important aspect of their research was to unveil whether Monti intentionally used his personal life to get closer to voters, who did not know him very well, and to the readership of celebrity gossip magazines, who are not interested in politics in the first place. Authors find that although reports about his personal life were published and disseminated without Monti's knowledge or consent, they did not damage the Prime Minister's reputation (2014, p. 459). On the contrary, the Prime Minister's spokeswoman acknowledged the benefits to Monti's persona, saying that he often appears to be a very serious and reserved man, while the beautiful pictures in tabloid magazines presented him as the ordinary person he is. The authors conclude that "increased attention from the gossip press towards Mario Monti and his family has been perceived as a useful (though unwanted) way to adjust his persona" (ibid). A similar example is the former UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, who was also perceived as being a reserved person, for which reason, just before becoming Prime Minister, and as part of a campaign to soften his persona, Brown gave a number of "confessional" interviews, where he tried to speak "intimately" about his upbringing, his children, and his preferences in popular culture (Langer, 2010, pp. 66-67). However, Langer finds that for such a reserved person publicly speaking about his private life clearly looked awkward (ibid).

All these scholars stress the importance of the roles of the media and media culture in shaping candidates' image and constructing their public personalities. West and Orman emphasise the role of media with respect to image making, saying that specialists are important, because they try to create ideas of honesty, composure, competency, compassion, toughness, and likability for their candidates, but, in West and Orman's words, they "do not have the last say with respect to image-making since the media filter campaign presentations" (2003, p. 22). Most of the research done so far relates to media presentations of political actors, while there is scarce evidence about the construction of their public image on the platforms which they entirely control, and on which they independently decide what, and in which way, they want to reveal about themselves. The findings of this doctoral thesis will contribute to the understanding of how leaders use social media to construct their public images and what the role of private and popular cues in this process is.

Recalling the well-studied political communication of Tony Blair, we should remember that journalists were accusing Blair and his advisors of having an obsession with the image, style and polls, while Blair was accusing them of spinning him and of allegedly shallow political reporting (Van Zoonen, 2005, pp. 19, 29). Finally, the use of social media by political actors can give a very straightforward answer on this debate since, on social media, we do not have journalists, who are often accused of trivialising politics because of their greater interest in “scandals, conflicts, incompetence, both personal and political – core ingredients for the soap metaphor in modernist discourse” (Van Zoonen, 2005, p. 25), on social media it is only them (politicians) and us (citizens).

The intention of this study is thus to reveal whether popular and private cues communicated by political leaders can engage a greater number of people in the online discussion. I believe that research of this kind is of increasing importance in “a media environment in which traditional news coverage generally (and political coverage in particular) are becoming increasingly marginalised in a de-regulated media system” (Street et al., 2012, p. 339). Moreover, West and Orman say that with popular culture merging with the political system, the press has moved towards a style of reporting that emphasises Hollywood-style gossip and scandal, to the detriment of traditional politicians and political parties (2003, p. x). In the same context, Van Zoonen talks about the use of soap-opera metaphors in politics that are firmly anchored in modernist discourse (2005, p. 34). Moreover, she explains the dominant frames in which political stories are reported: scandal, conflict, incompetence, spin control (Van Zoonen, 2005, pp. 25-30).

Street et al. (2012), in their research about the role of popular culture in engaging young people in politics, investigated how different cultural forms and platforms were used (or not used) to provide a source of knowledge about, and responses to, the public world of politics. These authors, besides studying TV formats which are most commonly studied in the field of popular culture and politics, also deal with the role of music and video games. Yet different online forms were not included in the research, for which reason I contend that this research is most relevant, although it does not deal with researching publics directly. Street et al. (2012, p. 355) conclude their research by believing that “popular culture matters politically”, and that we should look at entertainment television, music and videogames as we do at news and current affairs, as we confront the problems of political participation, and media’s part in it.

Moreover, Street and others find that popular entertainment may serve as a source of knowledge, but also of identities and feelings of attachment. Bennett also says that culture is (2003) important in strengthening political commitments, which, in today's context of weakening social ties, is especially important, because voters are no longer loyal and committed, and we have to find other ways to make them commit to a certain party or person. In this context, Street et al. call for consideration of the cognitive, affinitive and evaluative uses of popular culture in politics (Street et al., 2012, p. 355). The use of film and television celebrities to endorse candidates and parties has always been part and parcel of American politics, but other countries, such as the UK (Brownstein, 1992), Italy (Ciaglia & Mazoni, 2014), Canada (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019), Netherlands (Kaal, 2018), have also applied these techniques.

In the context of the Americanisation thesis, it can be said that this has become the new normal. Since all of the mentioned techniques are now widely spread and recognisable, we face a situation in which citizens, thanks to media reporting, are more and more aware of these “tricks” and it is harder and harder to seduce them. Back to the US, where obviously everything starts, but also ends, and where maybe a good example to demonstrate how hard it is now to “seduce” voters would be the last US Presidential elections. In this campaign dozens of the most famous celebrities in the film and music industry, sports and reality TV (Bruce Springsteen, Beyoncé and Jay Z, Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore, George and Amal Clooney, Robert De Niro, Kim Kardashian, Katy Perry, Magic Johnson), endorsed Hillary Clinton, and yet she lost the elections. She did get a bigger number of votes, but she still lost, because of the complex American voting system and many other factors that had an impact on the results of the 2016 US elections. This example demonstrates what is already well-known, that a recipe for electoral victory does not exist, because the ingredients are always different: the candidate, the context, the opponent, journalists, opinion makers...

2.2.4 Cool politics – myth, paradox, or democratic potential?

Pountain and Robins write: “Cool is never directly political, and politics, almost by definition, can never be Cool” (2000, p. 171). If we stop for a moment and think about this, we will be easily convinced that this is the truth. Thinking about the economy, unemployment rates, taxes, health care, public hospitals, schools, the entire educational system, infrastructure, borders, security issues, international affairs, etc., we know that the list is almost endless, because

politics has something to do with every aspect of our lives, and we can find hardly anything that is cool by definition in these areas. Street follows the same argument, saying that while it may be that some politicians can be deemed 'cool' (for example, J.F. Kennedy), most are not, and all - including Kennedy - inevitably enact policies that are deemed 'uncool' (Street, 2003, p. 97). Yet if this is the case and politics, by its definition, cannot be cool, how is it that politicians are trying to be cool all the time? The answer is, of course, an easy one – to attract voters and gain popularity. Or, better, to gain popularity in order to attract voters. And not just any popularity, as Street explains (2003, p. 96), but popularity in a particular way, in the way that the stars of popular culture are stylishly cool.

Yet Street (2003) notices that being stylishly cool, as stars in popular movies are, contradicts with doing politics, because cool in popular culture is associated with “not caring” about something, and in politics you have to care a lot and you have to show that you care. Bringing these arguments together, we can imagine how hard it is to become a popular politician. Of course, many opponents of the popular in politics will say that politics is not here to be cool, fun, and popular, but it is here to deal with serious issues that are not fun from any aspect. And they will have a good point, but that will also take us to a discussion about elite politics, politics that is led and presented only to the privileged, who have time and who are well educated, in order to understand complex political processes, and who are rationally discussing them and deciding for whom they will vote on the basis of all of the available information.

However, the reality looks different and, as Van Zoonen trenchantly observes: people “do” politics in their leisure time, and in leisure time politics has to fight for attention with all of the fun things, from TV shows to sports (2005). Moreover, ideal fully informed citizens are definitely a myth. I would say a bigger myth than cool politics. In today’s life, when the paradigm has completely changed (see Bennet & Iyengar, 2008), it is clearly obvious that citizens do not have that luxury of being a “rational citizen”. In trying to make cool politics and cool candidates, we step into the business practice and introduce marketing as a legitimate political practice, which establishes the connection between the world of commodities and the world of politics (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 89). The authors explain that politics can be compared to business due to two main arguments: the first one relates to a sole definition of democracy, where democracy is defined as “the competitive struggle for power, decided by the popular vote”, and the second argument concerns the motivation of agents within politics, who act with bounded-rationality. Street (2012) explains how the Labour party in the UK used the term cool

in politics, in efforts to present Tony Blair as cool Prime Minister and the whole country as Cool Britannia. The campaign was successful at the time it appeared, but yet, it is remembered how the branding of Tony Blair ended - in mutual accusations between the press and Blair's communications' advisers who were a bigger spinner – the media, or his advisers, led by the infamous Alastair Campbell (ibid). In this economic approach, candidates and their policies are seen as products that need to be sold (see Scammell, 2003). Street emphasises, here, the differences between the economic and the cultural approach, saying that for both approaches image and emotional responses are very important, but also explains that the economic approach is selling a product, while the cultural approach is selling the performance (Street, 2003, p. 94).

Barack Obama understood very well the importance of communication, the logic of product and performance, image and emotional responses, and he knew that giving more than 3,300 speeches on what he and his team were doing is not sufficient to have citizens' support. At this point, the online magazine, *Politico.eu*, writes that Obama very often blamed insufficient communication for the bad image of him and his policies. They write about how he quipped to his aides after the meeting: "Our policies are so awesome. Why can't you guys do a better job selling them?" He also emphasised: "One thing I need to constantly remind myself and my team is that it's not enough to build a better mousetrap. People don't automatically come beating to your door. We've got to sell it." (Grunwald, 2016, May 1). Street explains the economic approach by using the notion that, for instance, the Labour Party sells merchandise: coffee mugs, T-shirts and cufflinks branded with its logo (2003, p. 92).

Obvious critique that accompanies the process of the personalisation of politics is the fear that voters will be seduced and manipulated by the candidates' appearances, and that they will rely only on emotional and popular cues when bringing political decisions, which is all together a threat to the democratic process, because it undermines the importance of rational discussion and rational arguments in politics. As Marcus points out: "Emotion is considered a troublemaker, intruding where it does not belong and undermining the undisturbed use of deliberative capacity" (2002, p. 5).

Furthermore, the popularisation of politics is criticised for blurring the boundaries and levelling the hierarchy between high political representation and low popular culture (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 2). Pels finds that critiques also go that far, and they relate the emotionalization and

aestheticization of politics with right-radical political ideologies, saying that Fascism and National Socialism during the past century were the products of an irrationalist 'spirit of revolt' that privileged action and spectacle above content (2003, p. 52). For example, Smith and French have argued that "when branding has been applied in the political marketplace, it can produce unwanted effects, such as narrowing the political agenda, increasing confrontation, demanding conformity of behaviour/message, and even increasing political disengagement at the local level (...) For some at least, political parties are not soap powder brands and should not be treated as such" (2009, p. 210). Dahlgren (2000, p. 36) acknowledges that popularisation can, and has been in many cases, a positive development, bringing more people into the public sphere, but he continues by saying that, by most accounts today, popularisation is degenerating into trivialisation and sensationalism.

On the other hand, we have authors who believe that we have to incorporate into politics the "irrationality" of the emotions. This is the strategy suggested by David Marshall who argues that: "we need to incorporate into our account of politics the 'irrationality' of the emotions that inspire political life" (1997, p. 204). He further states: "In politics, a leader must somehow embody the sentiments of the party, the people, and the state. In the realm of entertainment, a celebrity must somehow embody the sentiments of an audience" (ibid). Scammell and Langer also argue that emotions and reason are not opposed to each other, but rather work with each other (2006, p. 778). They explain how emotions are a necessary condition for political involvement and participation. Moreover, they say that emotions facilitate rational discourse (ibid). We might say that emotions are like the cream on the cake. Cream maybe sells the cake, because cream makes the cake look delicious but, at the same time, cream does not make a whole cake.

To sum up, as an answer to those who are frightened that citizens can be seduced only with the style and emotions, Pels (2003) answers that style, marketing and branding are parts of the process and are an important dimension of political communication, but certainly not all that matters. The rational calculations of Downsian or Schumpeterian Citizens would not generate the required response, any more than 'need' explains why people buy particular cars, records or clothes (Street, 2003, pp. 91-92). What is too often defined as political cynicism or civic withdrawal, might more often be a rejection of traditional political divisions and of the arrogance of distanced, self-absorbed political professionals (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 2).

In the end, the critiques of the concept of the personalisation of politics and accompanying concepts that were encouraged by the new media environment can be as loud as they want, yet they will have a hard time to challenge the argument that politics as we knew it before the appearance of television was something reserved for the elites, for educated and rich people from families with reputations, while, today, politics is for the masses. By making it popular and bringing it closer to the citizens, politics became more democratised. Many authors see political taste, intuition, emotion, personal, “fantasy-laden doing of politics”, and experience, as a new democratic potential that may work so as to encourage greater citizen participation in politics (Van Zoonen, 2004; Pels, 2003; Ankersmit, 1997; Marshall, 1997). Bearing in mind that the already mentioned normative approach of a “good citizen” never existed, and that citizens “do” politics in their leisure time, it is easy to assume that they will rely on subjective, irrational and affective clues when bringing political decisions, and not just rational, objective, and fully informed ones.

In this chapter, key drivers of personality politics are discussed. Also, I tried to elaborate conceptual potential of privatisation and celebrity politics. My hope was to advocate the position of the “cultural populists” (Corner & Pels, 2003; Van Zoonen, 2004; Street, 2003), who believe in democratic potential of popular politics. In this Chapter, I have touched upon the roles of the internet and social media in political communication, the topics that will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.3 Political communication on social media

In the following sections firstly the definition of social media is provided. Secondly, trends in online political communication are discussed together with the personalisation of political communication on social media. Lastly, the limitations and challenges of studying social media are debated.

2.3.1 Social media defined

Social media, social media networks, social networking sites, social network sites, online services, social media platforms - all these terms are often used as synonyms, without clear distinctions and definitions.

Let us just take a few examples: In *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, the authors, in the introduction to the book, call Twitter, Facebook, Weibo, Instagram, VKontakte – *social media platforms* (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017, p. 2), while further on in the text, and in most chapters only the term *social media* is used and its definition attempted. Similarly, Klinger and Svensson (2015) define Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc., as *social media platforms*. Jungherr, in his book on Twitter, refer to Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc. as *online “services”* (2015). Stromer-Galley uses term *social media* when she talks about Facebook (2014, p. 107) as does Enli Gunn (2017). Larsson and Kalsnes use *social media services* and *social media* in their article about campaigning on Facebook and Twitter (2014). Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 211) use the term *social network sites*. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) differentiate between the terms *social media* and *social networking sites*, wherein *social media* is a hub term. The term *social networks* is used in Statista reports on the popularity of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. worldwide.

To clarify the meanings of these terms, I will start this brief overview with the definitions of *social media* and *social networking sites*: “*Social media* is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0⁴ that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 49). In other words, the term ‘*social media*’ is usually used to describe various forms of media content that are created by ordinary users and is publicly available. Sympathetically, *social media* is sometimes described as the lovechild of the World Wide Web (Clement, 2019, August 2). Further, *social networking sites* (SNS) are defined as: “applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 63). Similarly, Boyd and Ellison use the term ‘*social network sites*’ and define this: “as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (2008, p. 211).

⁴ The term Web 2.0 was first publicly coined by Tim O’Reilly in 2003. The approach was primarily focused on the technological aspects. Chadwick and Howard, to some extent, have adjusted the seven key principles which define Web 2.0: “the internet as a platform for political discourse; the collective intelligence emergent from political web use; the importance of data over particular software and hardware applications; perpetual experimentalism in the public domain; the creation of small-scale forms of political engagement through consumerism; the propagation of political content over multiple applications; and rich user experiences on political websites” (2009, p. 4).

These definitions suggest that ‘social media’ is an umbrella term that encompasses different types and forms of internet-based applications, and that social networking sites are one of these types and forms of social media. Yet as was elaborated in the first paragraphs of this section, the authors use these terms somewhat differently, but with the same meanings. McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase have made a synthesis of several definitions of social media and they came up with comprehensive one that says: “Social media are web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, co-create, modify, share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible” (2017, p. 18).

However, for the purposes of this study, I will rely on somewhat simpler definitions, as proposed by Stromer-Galley, who defines social media as “those digital media applications that allow for connection with others for social or professional purposes” (2014, p. 107) or by Klinger and Svensson who use the term ‘social media platforms’ and define these as “online loci in which users can contribute, inform, be informed, and network with others (such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter)” (2015, p. 24).

Social media – an umbrella term

It has already been mentioned that authors, in general, differentiate among various types and forms of social media. Kaplan and Haenlein use the term ‘social media’ as an umbrella term which includes: collaborative projects (the best known example is Wikipedia); blogs which are the earliest form of social media; content or sharing communities, whose main purpose is sharing content that can be in different formats, the most popular example is YouTube; virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds, like the widely known *Second Life*, are also types of social media (2010, pp. 62-64). Lastly, social networking sites are the type of social media that we mostly refer to when using the term ‘social media’. The most popular example is Facebook. There are very similar distinction between the different forms in which social media come is made by Statista: blogs, forums, business networks (LinkedIn), content-sharing platforms (YouTube, Pinterest), social gaming (*Second Life*), microblogs (Twitter), chat-apps (WhatsApp) and social networks (Facebook) (Clement, 2019, August 2). Likewise, Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 211) say that SNSs can differ in nature and nomenclature, and likewise in their features and user base. This means that on some SNSs you have profiles, friends, followers, comments and private messaging (Facebook, Instagram), while others have built-in

microblogging features (Twitter), and instant messaging technology (Viber, WhatsApp), or they are specified for photo-sharing (Pinterest) or video-sharing capabilities (YouTube).

McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase (2017, p. 18) bring an even more detailed and comprehensive distinction amount the various types of Social Media:

- Social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn),
- bookmarking (Delicious, StumbleUpon),
- microblogging (Twitter, Tumblr),
- blogs and forums (LiveJournal, Wordpress),
- media sharing (YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest),
- social news (Digg, Reddit),
- collaborative authoring (Wikipedia, Google Docs),
- web conferencing (Skype, GoToMeeting, Zoho Meeting),
- geo-location-based sites (Foursquare, Yik-Yak, Tinder),
- scheduling and meeting (Doodle, Google Calendar, Microsoft Outlook).

Within these types of social media, we might add another type that refers to the expansion of instant messaging applications (Viber, WhatsApp, Facebook messenger). Although messaging apps are primarily designed for communication, and not for networking, broadcasting, informing, etc. they are of late overwhelmingly used for much more than for communication between two or a few individuals. It can also be noticed how much advertising is going on through Viber, Facebook Messenger, not to mention all the push up notifications with news, to large issue groups that individuals create and which function on the logic of social networks: one individual creates a group, adds all her/his friends that might be interested in the topic, his/her friends add their friends and the group just grows.

In this thesis I will be using the term ‘social media’ when referring mainly to the social networking site Facebook, because that term is still the most often used, especially in the literature that is cited in this thesis.

In most of these examples, ‘social media’ refer to the presently well-known platforms, but we need to bear in mind that the idea of the “various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users” existed well before MySpace (2003) and Facebook (2004). The term ‘social media’ only became popular in 2005, with the rise of these two platforms

(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), but also due to the growing availability of high-speed internet. The origins of social media can be tracked back to 1979 “when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created the Usenet, a worldwide discussion system that allowed internet users to post public messages”, or to 1998, when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded the less known “Open Diary,” which was an early social networking site where online diary writers gathered into one community (2010, p. 60). In other words, this means that the idea of social media was born well before the appearance of Facebook and other popular sites. Boyd and Ellison (2008), in their comprehensive study on social media are more specific when reaching after the term social media, alleging that the first recognisable social network site which allowed users to create profiles and list their Friends was SixDegrees.com which was launched in 1997.⁵ Either way, social media are now part of our past, present, and will definitely be part of our future. Since they appeared, they are developing, changing, improving and adjusting to the moment of the time.

Social media in numbers

The latest Statista report demonstrates the enormous power of social media, which is expected to reach three billion monthly active users by 2021, a third of the worlds’ entire population (Clement, 2019, August 2). Facebook is the largest and most popular social media network. In a very short period, since Facebook first appeared in 2004, it reached enormous popularity. In July 2019, Facebook had 2.37 billion active users across the world (ibid). Facebook users generate 4 million likes every minute, they post 350 million photos per day, in a month, the average user likes 10 posts, makes 4 comments, and clicks on 8 ads (Smith, 2019, June 1). YouTube, with two billion active users, is the second most popular social network in 2019, WhatsApp has 1.6 billion users, Facebook Messenger 1.3 billion, 1.1 billion users of WeChat⁶, while Instagram, the fastest growing network, reached one billion active accounts. Other popular social media which counts hundreds of millions of active users are: QQ, QZone, Tik Tok, Sina Weibo, Reddit, V Kontakte, etc. Of course, Twitter, which has 330 million active users in 2019, is among these popular social media networks. Moreover, the popularity of Twitter cannot be measured only in the numbers of users, but also by the impact that it has on the public sphere, which is best supported by the electoral win of Donald Trump in the 2016 US

⁵ See Boyd and Ellison (2008) for a detailed history of social network sites

⁶ WeChat is a Chinese multi-purpose site for “social interaction, a form of currency, a dating app, a tool for sporting teams and deliverer of news: Twitter, Facebook, Google maps, Tinder and Apple Pay all rolled into one” (McDonnell, 7 June 2019).

Presidential elections, during which he extensively used Twitter and took all of the advantages of the platform to get into office.

The popularity of social media is growing every single day. Infrastructure, architecture and features of these popular platforms are also changing daily. The profile of the users is changing. One day teenagers are using Facebook, and the next it is their grandmas and granddads who use Facebook, while teenagers move on to Tik Tok, Instagram, or something else. While trends in social media usage are beyond the scope of this research, I will focus on the use of the most popular social media network, Facebook, in relation to political communication.

Facebook and Twitter in political arena

The importance of social media in every segment of our society is indisputable. Politics is one segment into which social media have penetrated and have completely changed the world of politics as we knew it. Already a decade ago in 2009 the former Democratic Presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, gave an apt speech at New York State University, in which she emphasised that politics used to be a job done by men in dark suits with briefcases in their hands, behind closed doors and away from the public eye, whereas today, thanks to the internet and social networks, politics is run differently, more openly, more transparently, more directly, politics has become more accessible, and the power of citizens has increased tremendously. Clinton goes on to say that social networks helped Barack Obama to win his first term in the White House, then helped citizens organise and carry out numerous protests and demonstrations to get their voices heard. She mentioned many other examples that demonstrate the importance and power of social media in politics, whether they serve citizens or politicians in achieving their goals. The speech is available at U.S. Department of State YouTube channel (YouTube, 2009, May 13). Since the day that Clinton spoke these words, technology has been progressively expanding and developing, connectivity has surpassed all expectations, and social networks have irreversibly infiltrated politics and become an integral part of it.

On the one hand, social media have empowered politicians, providing them with numerous opportunities for campaigning, attracting citizens, for informing media and citizens about day to day activities in the office, for building better international relations. On the other hand, social media have empowered citizens, they gave to citizens a voice they did not have earlier, they gave them a tool and a platform for organising, protesting, campaigning, setting the agenda, expressing their opinions, informing about politics, reading news. Social media also

brought numerous changes for the traditional media. While many thought that the internet and social media would cause the disappearance of the traditional media, that did not happen, just as the appearance of radio did not kill print, and television did not kill radio or print. Traditional media had to adjust to the new media environment, they had to adapt new ways of communication with their publics.

In this pool of opportunities and possibilities for citizens, politicians and the media, Facebook and Twitter appeared to be two of the most prominent and useful social media sites. Despite the fact that both these social media sites have their role in politics, they differ in their infrastructure, their primary purpose of use, the number of users, the profile of those users. For instance, research conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2017, in the US, shows that 45% of US adults get news on Facebook, which makes Facebook by far the leading social media site that is used as a source of news (Shearer & Gottfried, 2017, p. 6). As a comparison, only 11% of US adults use Twitter to get news, but the majority of Twitter's active users (74%) get news from Twitter. Yet as already mentioned, numbers are not what makes Twitter so important, it is a belief that Twitter is a channel for a privileged stratum of society, journalists, officials, opinion makers, the well-educated. Shearer and Gottfried's research supports that idea to some extent, showing that people who use Twitter to get news are, on average, better educated than the news users of other platforms (2017, p. 8).

Larsson similarly describes Twitter as a "channel for politicians to communicate and network with those of equal privilege, rather than to counter the decline in political participation and interest" (Larsson, 2015, p. 163). Politicians know that most of their voters are on Facebook, which is why they consider Facebook the most important platform for political campaigning (Williams & Gulati, 2009), compared to other platforms, such as Twitter (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). It has already been confirmed by the number of its users that Facebook is more popular among citizens. Some authors suggest that Facebook is the most popular because of the features it offers. Carlisle and Patton take as examples "newsfeed" and "wall", on which users can very easily, and with minimal technological knowledge, leave a comment, like, or share something, and thus increase participation (2013). Andersen and Medaglia, in their study, showed that the majority of their respondents used Facebook to communicate with their candidate in the parliamentary election in Denmark in 2007 (2009, p. 108).

Social media functions: broadcasting vs. the interactive function of social media

In the political arena, social media are used by politicians, media, but also by citizens. Social media enable politicians to mobilise supporters, build public image, promote issues and programs, influence the public agenda, and it enables politicians to directly communicate with citizens. It brings to them their independence from the traditional media. They no longer depend on media interpretations of what they have said, done or thought. They do not depend on what a journalist will select and cut from their statements. They can control the message by posting, deleting, or editing it, or by giving additional explanations for some misunderstood information (Patrut, 2018, p. 59). Rahat and Kenig, because of that, call social media controlled media. Moreover, they also find that the online communication options much more easily combine the dissemination of verbal, written and visual communication at high speed and with unlimited space (2018, p. 172). However, they stress that social media “are controlled but not isolated”, which means that they have an impact on uncontrolled new (online) and old (traditional) media, such as television, radio, and newspapers (ibid).

The uses of social media for political purposes has become a regular thing and, in the last few years, it has been growing. For instance, Smith finds that, in 2010, 22 percent of Americans used social networking sites for political purposes (Smith, 2011, January 27), while, in 2017, the number of adult Americans who used only social media to get news was 67% (Shearer & Gottfried, 2017, p. 2). Somewhat different findings were found in the latest Statista report, which examined what sources citizens used to get news about the US mid-term elections in 2018. The results show that Television is still the primary source, with a share of 62% of the respondents, while online sources were used to get news by 51% respondents.

Yet many studies show that social media still serves mainly for broadcasting messages. Graham et al. define “broadcasting as a form of unidirectional communication and the behaviours listed under it are primarily used in this manner, while interaction consists of behaviours that are based on reciprocity and are typically about engaging others” (2013, p. 704). They differentiate among five broadcasting behaviours. The first, and most used, was Updating from the campaign trail - defined as a new type of behaviour that has the function of increasing visibility and creating a sense of connectedness with the public. Second one was promoting which included tweets in which a candidate promoted him/herself, a fellow politician, the party or other organisation. This category included what is also a commonly used behaviour: “campaign promotion”, which was expanded on a newly examined social media platform – Twitter. The

third category that described broadcasting behaviour was critiquing, which included attacks on, and the criticising of, opponents and their policies. Information disseminating was a rarely used type of behaviour on Twitter in the parliamentary elections in 2010 in the UK. This type of broadcasting behaviour refers to Tweets in which candidates “provided news (typically by dropping links) or other factual information (e.g., government reports)” (Graham, 2013, p. 706). Lastly, candidates almost never posted a Tweet with his/her opinion, argument or the party position on a political issue. This kind of behaviour is categorised as position taking.

Some other studies also showed that the broadcasting function is used more often than the interactivity function (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Jungherr, 2015; Larsson & Moe, 2012; Seizov, 2018; Vučković & Bebić, 2013). For instance, Enli and Skogerbø (2013), in their study about the use of Twitter and Facebook in parliamentary elections in 2009, and in local elections in 2011, find that social media were often used for broadcasting messages, even by candidates whom they categorised as being active, in comparison with those that were described as invisible, silent and moderate on social media. For example, quantitative content analysis of the Facebook posts of the five major parties in Bulgaria in the 2015 local elections, showed that Facebook’s unique communicative affordances were largely under-used (Seizov, 2018). Political parties did use Facebook, and they used it as “a primary campaign information channel or a mere aggregator and disseminator of information generated elsewhere and/or by others” (Seizov, 2018, p. 105). Bulgarian Facebook campaigning did not lack multimodal content that was created to inform, persuade, or mobilise, which shows that there is a clear move towards the professionalisation of online based political communication, likewise in other CEE-centred research (Seizov, 2018, p. 115). However, it lacked original content and interactive content, indicating that “Facebook was used as a loudspeaker, in a decidedly one-way manner” (p. 114). Moreover, “the persistent suggestion across several campaigns that administrators removed dissenting commentary” points to the censorship which goes “against the very nature of social media as open discussion spaces” (ibid).

So the question is - if social media serve only for broadcasting messages, then there is no large difference between web pages and social media, do social media, in that case, indeed serve only as a clipboard, as another broadcasting platform, and/or as a promotional channel for politicians? Luckily, although the broadcasting function of social media is found to be the most often used function, interactivity is what makes social media so special and different from any other medium. Social media technology is one of the capabilities that has fundamentally

changed the landscape in which the user/political actor is engaged (Carlisle & Patton, 2013, p. 885). One of the main functions, and one of the founding ideas on which social media were built, is interaction. Facebook is only one good example because of its specific infrastructure, which provides tools to facilitate engagement (ibid). Carlisle and Patton find that Facebook itself is uniquely positioned to facilitate online engagement, because its feature-set (e.g., the “newsfeed” and user “wall”) acts as a mechanism to support the individual’s voice in broadcasting political content to a networked audience or an online public sphere” (2013, p. 885). These authors also found a group of candidates who use social media to interact with voters by, for example, mobilising, helping and consulting them (Graham et al, 2013). Likewise, results from Enli and Skogerbø’s research in Norway showed that 56% of all of the examined Tweets from the sampled politicians included “features for dialogue, such as mentions, i.e., replying to updates by using @username, or retweets, i.e., republishing tweets by other users” (2013, p. 13). Similar findings regarding new alternative communication spaces free from the media system that parallels the state of politics have also been found in Bulgaria (Seizov, 2018, p. 101). Although, political parties did not use interactive content on their pages, Seizov finds that social media have become spaces where not only the “electorate, parts of which feel increasingly underrepresented or downright harassed (Freedom House, 2015b)” can freely express their opinion, but also for journalists who have “less fear of prosecution under Bulgaria’s relatively stringent libel laws” when communicating in online spaces (Spirova, 2015 in Seizov, 2018, p. 101).

The interactivity function and the participatory potential of social media will be discussed in more details in Section 2.4, while, in the following subsections, we will talk a little bit more about the broadcasting function of social media in online political communication.

2.3.2 From professionalisation to de-professionalisation on social media

The professionalisation of political communication and political marketing, and likewise permanent campaigning, are concepts related to the model of post-modern campaigns (Norris, 2001). Post-modern campaigns are one of three different campaign models developed by Pippa Norris, which have become the starting point of every study of political marketing. The first two models she calls the ‘pre-modern campaign’ and the modern campaign. Pre-modern campaigns are characterised by strong political parties and the partisan press that was the main intermediary between citizens and politicians. This period started in 19th century democracies

and lasted until the expansion of television in the 1950s. Following this, there was the age of modern campaigning, which started in the 1950s. In this period, candidates were gaining a more important role in the party organisations. Employing external professional advisors and consultants was also becoming a necessity, the industry of opinion pollsters was flourishing, television was one of the main drivers of the modernisation process in this period, and it was the main channel for campaigning (ibid).

In the third mentioned model, campaigns are “understood as those where the coterie of professional consultants on advertising, public opinion, marketing, and strategic news management become more co-equal actors with politicians, assuming a more influential role within government in a ‘permanent’ campaign, as well as coordinating local activity more tightly at the grassroots” (Norris, 2003, p. 3). Post-modern campaigns, introduced in the early 1990s, are also characterised by the changes in the media environment, which is becoming more market driven and diverse, than with the attempt by parties to reassert control through professionalised communication and media management during the permanent campaign; this model of campaigns is also signified by the advent and development of the internet and of information and communication technologies that had a great impact in the political arena, and likewise in the whole of society (ibid). Relying on the argument that the internet has enabled new forms of party-voter interaction and new forms of party, candidate, and programs promotion, Vergeer et al. (2011) find that putting the internet under the umbrella of third model is no longer sufficient. They introduce a fourth emerging model, which is characterised by the use of personally-kept web platforms, such as social media. Authors suggest that this model, because communication on social media is personalised, should be called “personal campaigns”.

Lilleker and Negrine, who define the professionalisation of political communication as a “specialization of tasks, the increased use of experts and the management or centralization of the campaign” and not just as the notion that campaigns have become more professional” (2002, p. 102), also stress the importance of technological changes and electronic communication in the evolution of campaigning. The internet is seen as a major technological stimulus to the modernisation and professionalisation of election campaigns because it enables politicians to send messages directly to dispersed and diverse publics (Zittel, 2009 in Vergeer et al, 2013, p. 480). Similarly, Gulati and Williams (2013, p. 578) find that politicians have found a way to take advantage of the internet by integrating websites and social media into their larger

communication strategy. Many scholars have thus researched the professionalisation of campaigns in the context of the internet and social media (Enli, 2017; Kreiss & Jasinski, 2016; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Lilleker & Negrine, 2002; Seizov, 2018; Stromer-Galley, 2014). Most of them find that communication on social media is more and more professionalised and that, in most cases, it serves a broadcasting function, while the interactivity function and the democratic potential of social media are neglected and only partially used. These authors also notice that the internet, in general, and social media, in particular, have enabled politicians and political organisations to be present among their electorate all the time, literally 24/7. Politicians no longer have to wait for the traditional media to broadcast their messages; they do not have to wait for the newspapers and TV news to see if their message will reach the voters. Now, they can reach their publics directly whenever they want, they can campaign all the time. This phenomenon is known as permanent campaigning. Permanent campaigning can be described as a consequence of the professionalisation of political and electoral communication, which is intensified in the social media era.

Started in the US and the UK, permanent campaigning refers to the idea that campaigning never stops, but is continuous from the day of an election victory to the day of new elections (Needham, 2005, p. 344). Blumenthal, who was first to coin this concept (1982), explains permanent campaign theory, saying that it has become ever more difficult to distinguish campaigning from governing. Ornstein and Mann offer the same argument, saying that: “the process of campaigning and the process of governing have lost their distinctiveness” (2000, p. 219). Relying on the assumption that communication during the election campaign and during “normal time” is the same, Hecla concludes that “every day is election day” (2000, p. 17). Needham, in her article, brings an overview of the literature in which different features that have usually characterised election campaigns, have now become a prominent part of everyday government politics. These features include the “use of opinion polls in strategic communication, a prominent role of campaign consultants in government, a media fascination with the ‘horse race’ aspects of political life, and high-stakes posturing over every issue, with public support becoming a bargaining chip between politicians, parties and interest groups” (Needham, 2005, p. 344). Permanent campaigning is important, because it constantly produces media images that affect uncommitted voters during those times when they are not paying close attention to political debates (Van Onselen & Errington, 2007, p. 80).

Many scholars suggest that permanent campaigning may be on the rise with the advent of the internet and, specifically, of social media (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Tenscher, 2013; Vergeer et al., 2013). Back in 1998, years before social media platforms became so popular, Kent and Taylor wrote about how the digitalisation of the “permanent campaign” gave political actors an opportunity to reach out to both loyal and swing voters throughout the electoral cycle, facilitating, in that way, a stronger relationship between representatives and the represented. Vergeer et al. further explain how politicians need to keep the electorate interested all the time, because their loyalty is no longer as strong as it used to be (2013, p. 480). The internet appears to be a perfect platform which serves politicians to reach voters whenever they want, without depending on the traditional media (ibid).

Yet there are authors who doubt the role of the internet in permanent campaigning. Relying on the existing literature Ceccobelli finds that permanent campaigning is multidimensional and dynamic (2018, p. 124). He contradicts those authors who believe that we live in the permanent campaign era, by saying that permanent campaigning is not an automatic and ever-present phenomenon, but, rather, a variable that is changeable over time and in different contexts (ibid). In this context, Mann and Ornstein underline the importance of the political system as one of the factors which have an impact upon permanent campaigning (2000). They find that the political system in the United States is especially suited to permanent campaigning because of weak party discipline and a separation between the executive and the representatives that requires that presidents permanently campaign for the legislative passage of policies (ibid). Larsson indicates the problem with empirically measuring the “permanence”, because it is not clear what such permanence would involve (2015).

Either way around, it is undeniable that the internet has its role in the context of the professionalisation of campaigns, and in the context of permanent campaigns. It is also unquestionable that introducing a fourth emerging model, called “personal-campaigns”, which is characterised by the use of personally-kept web platforms, such as social media personalised communication and electoral campaigns even more, Vergeer et al. (2011). Relying on this notion, in the next section more will be said about the personalisation of online political communication.

2.3.3 Personalisation of online political communication

In the first part of this chapter, the phenomenon of the personalisation of politics is elaborated. How politics became personalised, what the key drivers of were, and what levels of personalisation are known about until now, were discussed. In the following paragraphs, how personalisation is manifested on social media will be discussed. Rahat and Kenig find that: “Because the content of websites and social network sites of parties and politicians originate from these parties and politicians, or at least are overseen by them, the corresponding phenomenon of personalisation belongs to the subtype of personalisation in the controlled media” (2018, p. 172).

As already mentioned, many authors find that social media, which are defined as “personally-kept web platforms” have personalised communication even more due to their nature, logic, and infrastructure. This means that every person today can have her/his own account on the different social media. Millions of these accounts, profiles and fan pages are the personal accounts of real persons, with their real names, surnames and photos. Ekman and Widholm find that: “The palpable focus on politicians’ personal characteristics, rather than the politics they represent, seems to be a growing trend in political communications practice on social media platforms” (2014, p. 520). Vergeer et al. similarly argue, saying: “With social media such as Facebook and Twitter, candidate-centred campaigning of the pre-modern period (interactive and localised) seems to be intensified, but now online, whereas personality-centred campaigning goes beyond conveying political messages, sending out messages on what occupies politicians from a personal or even private perspective” (2013, p. 481). According to Ekman and Widholm “the infrastructure of Twitter takes increasingly narcissistic forms, where publicity seems to be the foremost purpose of the communication” (2014, p. 520). Similarly, Mancini finds that “politicians’ Twitter use is primarily about the branding and marketing of personalised political identities” (2011, p. 51). In this context, the fourth model of campaigns is characterised by the global use and popularity of social media, and likewise with the personalisation of online political communication, which is driven by the nature of social media sites. Vergeer et al. describe “personal campaigns” as low-cost campaigns, computer-mediated, personalised and amateur (2013, p. 482).

Similarly to the fourth model of campaigns that was introduced by Vergeer et al. (2013), Enli Gunn introduces the fourth era of political communication, which comes after the three eras of

political communication that are proposed by Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) and discussed in the previous sections. Enli finds that, from the 2010s onwards, the “era of social media” is emerging (2017, p. 52). She describes that this era is similar to the third “digital era” and is characterised by the examples of “personalisation, anti-elitism or populism in political communication on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram” (ibid). However, this author finds that the differences between the third and fourth era are significant because, in the fourth era, elements of interactivity and Web 2.0 features came into use, empowering politicians, who now have a chance to communicate directly with citizens as they did in the “golden age of parties”. Further, Enli and Skogerbø (2013) explain that SNSs have enabled the personalisation of politics because of the new ways of political engagement and new and different forms through which citizens and politicians can connect.

Moreover, some authors believe that social media have enabled politicians to appear to be more simple and ordinary people, who have simple and ordinary lives, like their voters, and this helped them to be humanised and to appear to be “one of us” (Larsson, 2015; Manning, Penfold-Mounce, Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2017). Likewise, Manning et al. find that:

“The various platforms of social media promote forms of authentic communication by blurring the public/private divide, creating ‘spontaneous’ and instant access to ‘real life’. Social media provide for the publicization of ‘private’ everyday activities (e.g., through ‘selfies’), the sharing of ‘private’ thoughts and opinions, as well as being used to publicise ‘public’ parts of one’s life (e.g., work achievements). Moreover, social media is instantaneous, enabling ‘real life’ to be captured spontaneously making posts less formal, quickly composed, with many containing slang and abbreviations or resembling a stream of consciousness. These characteristics lend themselves to ‘authentic’ and ‘genuine’ representations, composed quickly to document a moment or share a current preoccupation” (2017, p. 131).

This definition brings us to the next section, in which the privatisation and informalisation thesis in the online environment will be discussed in more detail.

The privatisation and informalisation thesis on social media

In this context, Manning et al. test the “informalisation thesis” by asking young people about the way politicians and celebrities use social media (2017, p. 127). These authors build their research on the thesis developed by Wouters (2007), who defines the historical process of informalisation as the relaxation of social hierarchies. Wouters writes that in the twentieth century natural, authentic and, it can be said, free behaviour, become more appreciated than the behaviours that are constrained by formalities, rules and regulations (2007). However, while

the constraints of regulated manners decreased, “a constraint to be unconstrained, at ease, and authentic” increased (2007, p. 4). The historical process of informalisation is tightly related to the societal changes that occurred in late-modern society, which is characterised by the erosion of almost any traditional bases and forms of society, growing narcissism and the development of a new lifestyle that is related to consumerism (see Giddens, 1991). Informalisation and authenticity are intertwined concepts. Today, citizens reward them if politicians are authentic, if they are informal, and if they can explain what they do in simple words, and if the distance between them and the politicians they elected is reduced. Authenticity, in this context, can be defined as a new strategy in political communication that strays away from “staid, formulaic and on-message pronouncements” that are highly institutionalised in nature, and embracing an approach that is rooted in the reduction of the distance between elected officials and “those they (claim to) represent” (Graham, Jackson, & Broersma, 2017, p. 5). Loader, Vromen and Xenos find that, in the context of social media, authenticity can be defined as the interplay between his/her “political, public and private sphere in their social networking” (2016, p. 415).

When we talk about the authenticity and informalisation, two globally well-known politicians come to our mind: US former President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It could be said that these two politicians are impersonation of authenticity. Moreover, interplay between their political, public and private sphere in their social media profiles and channels are the most interesting case. Following, the use of social media by Obama and Trudeau will be briefly discussed.

Barack Obama and his online superpowers

The US Presidential elections of 2008 and 2012 together demonstrate how political elites embraced and then adapted to the changing communication environment (Bimber, 2014, p. 131). Specifically, the 2008 U.S. Presidential election marked “a significant shift in political campaigning, with the Obama campaign making unprecedented use of social media” (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015, p. 113). It is suggested that the “new paradigm in organisational structure of networked campaigning” occurred with the new ways of fundraising, organising and messaging strategy for the campaign (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 110). Barack Obama was the first to use online platforms “to empower his advocates by organising online and by extension in their social networks offline” (p. 125). The new political communication environment enabled Obama to make the most sophisticated and intensive use of digital media, and that helped him to build the “social-movement-like enthusiasm and personalised

entrepreneurialism among his supporters, while also running a highly disciplined, centrally organized campaign” (Bimber, 2014, p. 131). On the other hand, Hillary Clinton’s campaign during the Primaries, was more focused on common organisational structure in the paradigm of mass-media campaigning (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 110). While Obama used social media primarily to gather people into the “movement”, Clinton’s campaign was focused on softening her image. This does not surprise us if we know that Hillary Clinton entered the campaign as a well-known politician and the former first lady, while Obama had entered the elections as a relatively unknown senator, who now had the opportunity to build and create his image from the start. Obama used that momentum and very soon became globally popular. Sometimes, his popularity and striving for celebrity status was used against him, mainly by his party rivals, Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, who were attacking him for “offering hope and beautiful oratory that moved people to embrace him as a celebrity, but not necessarily real solutions to the nation’s challenges” (2013, p. 126).

One of the earliest videos in the campaign for the Primaries’ elections in the Democratic Party was published back in 2007, and it was “a campy but professionally produced R&B style music video” posted on a website, BarelyPolitical.com, and showing a young and beautiful woman singing *I got a crush on Obama* (ibid). The video went viral, circulating on YouTube, and the girl who was singing came to be known as Obama Girl. The video with the young woman who sings how she has a crush on the senator and the democratic candidate for the President of the United States, was one whole new different form of communication. Although Obama and his campaign managers stated that they had nothing to do with that video, everyone agrees that it gained him attention and popularity at the right moment. Obama reacted to the video, saying: “It’s just one more example of the fertile imagination of the internet... more stuff like this will be popping up all the time” (Clayworth, 2007, June 19). His statement clearly shows how well he understood the logic of the internet already, in 2007, when most of the other politicians did not have a clue how to communicate in this new environment, where literally anybody can publish anything and circulate it to many people. Obama understood that he needed a lot of supporters and sympathisers who would “work” for him on the internet, he knew that he could not beat the internet only with slogans and well-designed messages, he knew that he could have the internet on his side only if he motivated enough people to engage with him and the publics. Obama definitely succeeded in winning the internet. Although some communication strategists say that Clinton had an even better and more advanced online campaign infrastructure than

Obama, “she could not compete with the reality that Obama’s supporters tended to be those that look like Facebook” (Stromer-Galley, 2013, p. 110).

“Three years later, Barack Obama broke conventions once again when he publicly announced his re-election bid with a YouTube video and a tweet on April 4th, 2011” (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015, p. 113). This announcement gave a clear sign that social media were going to play a crucial role in these elections, as they had in the election in 2008. Moreover, the number of internet and social media users in these four years had risen enormously, which meant that online platforms would be even more important in these elections. Obama’s opponents, and many other politicians worldwide, learned from his campaign in 2008, and adjusted to the new communication environment. Obama now needed to go a step further and find a new innovative solution to dominate the internet for the second time and to motivate citizens once again now that the enthusiasm was dissipated. He succeeded, this time employing large scale data analytics and behavioural modelling (Bimber, 2014, p. 131). The “Obama campaign exploited data analytics to engage in an unprecedented level of personalised message-targeting in a handful of states, in order to win a closer election with highly honed, state-by-state tactics” (ibid). When his second term finished, and Donald Trump came to power, Barack Obama did not disappear from the internet, as many politicians do after their terms finish or they lose the elections. On the contrary, Barack Obama opened a new website, Obama.org, on which he promised to be there for everyone as a citizen, inspired with them and their voices of truth and justice, humour and love (Opam, 2017, January 20).

Justin Trudeau – the “selfie Prime Minister”

One of the most prominent and most intriguing cases that demonstrates the phenomenon of the personalisation of political communication is that of the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. Trudeau is handsome, young, a father of three, he is liberal, he promotes gender equality, his government has the same number of women and men in position, “because, it is 2015”, as he said when asked how that had happened. Trudeau has tattoos, he danced striptease for humanitarian action, he boxes, he wears statement colourful socks that are always commented on in the media, and especially on social media. Not to forget that Justin is a son of the former Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who was so popular during his terms in office that some authors talk about the ‘Trudeaumania’ phenomenon in 1968, which is probably “the earliest manifestation of a Prime Minister’s popularity surpassing that of his or her party” (McAllister, 2007, p. 571).

Moreover, he is a real social media star. Lalancette and Raynauld (2019, p. 889) call him the first Prime Minister of the Instagram era. Petrowski refers to him as the “king of the selfie” (2016 in Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 889). Similarly, some authors also call him the “selfie Prime Minister” (Proudfoot, 2016, August 11). He has more than three million followers on Instagram, and nearly seven million fans on Facebook (in 2019). Lalancette and Raynauld (2019) find that he used Instagram in a personalised way for direct communication with publics in Canada, but he also communicated with international publics. He did not constrain himself to talk only to Canadians, but he often referred to people all around the world, advocating liberal values and talking about minority rights, gender equality, climate change, and so on, as though it were his strategy, to be famous and loved around the world, so that people at home realise how happy they are to have you.

Social media platforms certainly helped him to gain huge popularity worldwide. Photos of his trained “bubbled” backside and the “looks” that women give him, fired up social media a few times (Pound, 2017, February 25). The best known is probably the photo of Ivanka Trump looking at him as though she had fallen in love. That photo went viral (Cresci, 2017, February 15) and dozens of memes were made from it. Photos and videos of him crying on different occasions were all over social media, but also the global mainstream media. He cried when, in 2016, he reunited with a Syrian refugee father, he cried at the funeral ceremony held for the three people killed in the shooting at a mosque in Quebec, he wept when Gord Downie died, and on many other occasions (Yahoo News, 2017, December 15). His style and his communication, especially on social media, were often analysed in the media. Katie Jeanes analysed, for Huffington Post, how he had become so popular on social media (2015, October 22). She distinguishes five things that had helped him to defeat other candidates and gain celebrity status. The first is video marketing, which is extensively used by Trudeau. He often posts short, dynamic videos, usually no longer than 30 seconds, because his team knows that longer videos will not attract a lot of fans. The second is the use of hashtags like #GenerationTrudeau and #RealChange, which are great in connecting fans and making a sense of community and affiliation. The third way of attracting followers on social media was the use of humor and references to popular culture. An important factor in gaining popularity was also his family. He sometimes shared private and intimate moments with his family. These photos always looked very authentic and honest, which was appreciated by his followers. Jeanes finds that the fifth way in which he made a relationship with his publics is interactivity, and the

response rate was high in Trudeau's case (2015). His team was accurate and fast in answering questions and comments, which is not very often seen among the other politicians who use social media. Most of them still use social media primarily for its broadcasting functions and less for two-way communication with citizens.

Yet Lalancette and Raynauld, in their study of the role of Instagram and celebrity politics in Justin Trudeau's political image building, find that he "does not use Instagram extensively to personalise himself through references to his private life and other personal matters" (2019, p. 903). His spouse, Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, was featured in pictures in 16.6%, and his children in 2.1% of the pictures. These authors find that posts on his Instagram profile are mainly centered "on his work in the Parliament setting, official international trips, in the Prime Minister's Office, as well as while attending events and meetings in the context of his official duties" (ibid). They conclude that Trudeau used Instagram in the first place to reinforce his political persona, his credibility, and his legitimacy as an international spokesperson (2017, p. 30). It is interesting to note that, in the traditional media, he was presented as a celebrity through his personal and political life, through selfies with other politicians and ordinary people, while, on his Instagram profile, he is presented as a polished and professional politician (ibid). It can be said that, in the case of Trudeau, the privatisation of political communication is more media driven than it is a part of communication strategy.

And many others...

There are many other politicians who should find their place in this section when we talk in the context of authenticity and informalisation, but I will only mention some of them who have cemented their place into scientific and professional literature, and also into world political history. First and foremost, on this list should be the already mentioned incumbent, the US President, Donald Trump, who used Twitter in his Presidential campaign in incredible ways and continued to use it during his Presidential term. He used Twitter to bypass "fake news", as he calls numerous established US media organisations, such as CNN, CBSC, but also everyone else who criticises him, and he is criticised by almost everyone. Trump uses Twitter to communicate with the media, with his constituents, celebrities, but also international politicians. His style of communication on this social media is something we have not had the opportunity to see in political communication so far. Often, these Tweets are completely uncontrolled, wild eruptions of the President's current mood. He attacks, ridicules, mocks, threatens, demands, quarrels. His tweets are mostly full of typographical errors and are semi-

literate. Yet many believe that this authenticity of his Tweets, the impression of sincerity, the impression that he wrote those statements himself, that no team of communication experts is behind them, brings him the votes of one significant part of the electorate. Experts and scientists have already tried numerous times to explore all of that (Enli, 2017; Ott, 2017), and they will certainly continue to try to answer numerous questions regarding Trump and his communication.

In addition to Trump, it is important to mention someone completely different, and that is Pope Francis. Pope Francis is the second most popular leader on Twitter. His Twitter channel is run in nine world languages. According to a regular Twiplomacy survey (Twiplomacy.com, 2019, April 9), Pope Francis has been at the top of the list of Twitter's most influential users for years. Together with the Pope, many other politicians are very active and popular on social media, like India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, King Salman of Saudi Arabia, the South Korean President Moon Jae-in, the Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, and many others.

2.3.5 Social media research methods – challenges and limitations

Previous studies of Social media and politics

The studies of social media are rapidly growing in number. How increscent the research in social media in the last decade is, shows the number of new journals that have been launched in the field of social media: *Social Media and Society*, *Big Data and Society*, *New Media and Society*, *Information, Communication and Society*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. The technology is rapidly changing, almost on a daily basis, the number of smartphones in the world is greater than the number of people in the world, more people in the world have a smartphone than have clean water, generation Z is overtaking the digital world, in 2018, 45% of the teens in the US said they are online on a nearly-constant basis (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), the number of self-made millionaires under 30 who have earned their millions in digital companies and on social media is increasing every day; it is harder and harder to distinguish social media from digital technology, because of the social elements that are now embedded in smartphone applications, but also in almost every other wearable technology (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017, p. 3). The list of rapid changes that are related to the development of information and communication technology is endless, as is the amount of internet traffic and data generated and stored every second. Consequently, more and more scholars study this revolution in communication, which brings both opportunities and challenges (ibid). On the one

hand, it provides many opportunities to study interactions, attitudes, opinions and virtual reactions to real-world events, but it also raises many challenges (ibid).

Mackova, Štětka, Zápotocký, and Hladík, identify three dominant discourses in overviewing the approaches to the use of new communication technologies by politicians (2018). The first discourse falls within the optimistic viewpoints about the democratic potential of the internet, which will help to renew broken connections between citizens and politicians. A leading scholar in this discourse is Stephen Colman. Coleman has written many books and articles which discuss and criticize the democratic potential of the internet (2003; 2004; 2017). The second discourse, which has been more popular in recent years in the academic literature, is focused mainly on the use of new media in election contests, “where the connection between citizens/voters and politicians is not so much a goal as an instrument of potential electoral gains” (Mackova et al, 2018, p. 25). In this context, scholars, on the one hand, have studied internet penetration rates and the implementation of the different possibilities that the new media offer and, on the other, the content and the style of communication by individual political actors on many online platforms (ibid). Mackova et al. introduce a third discourse that is focused on exploring politicians’ motivations for social media use and adoption. They summarise that politicians perceive social media to be an important instrument for communication and interaction.

These discourses, opportunities and challenges of social media are thoroughly studied in the context of Facebook and Twitter, wherein there is a greater number of studies that are focused on Twitter (Stier, Bleier, Arnim, & Strohmaier, 2018, p. 52). Many studies have examined the political use of Twitter in different contexts, such as during uprisings in totalitarian states, and in relation to different movements (Imre & Owen, 2014), and in different European countries, mostly in the context of election campaigning and governments’ use of social media in the Scandinavian countries (Larsson & Moe, 2012), Netherlands (Kruikemeier, 2014), and also in the United States and Korea (Otterbacher, Shapiro & Hemphill, 2013), Canada (Small, 2012), Russia and US (Alentyev, Cozart, Koretzky, & Kosterina, 2010) etc. Similarly, Facebook was also overwhelmingly studied in the context of election campaigns, usually in the short time periods before elections, in Israel (Bronstein, Aharony & Bar-Ilan, 2018), the US (Bronstein, 2013; Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015), the Scandinavian countries (Andersen & Medaglia, 2009; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). At the same time, the use of social media, and particularly Facebook, in the periods between election cycles remains under investigated. Only some of the

most recent studies have investigated the use of Facebook in the context of permanent campaigning, thus examining the periods between elections (Ceccobelli, 2018; Metz et al, 2019).

At the same time, scholars have been developing and studying methodological approaches to studying social media. These efforts have resulted in the publication of *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, which was published in 2016 and includes an extensive literature overview of the methods that have been used in studying social media networks. The *Handbook* offers answers to numerous computational and analytical challenges that research in social media is facing: "...how to process the vast amount of data, how to filter noise, how to democratize access to social media data for the wider social science community, how to understand online behaviour, and how to apply traditional social scientific concepts of sampling and inference, and coding and interpretation to understand the relationship between online communities and the wider population" (2016, p. 4).

The challenges that social media have brought are thoroughly addressed in the *Handbook* and are summed up in relation to the 6 Vs: volume, variety, velocity, veracity, virtue and value (in Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017, p. 3). Volume, in this context, refers to data collection and the storage of data, variety refers to the multimodal nature of social media content: "including text, images, videos, geospatial check ins, and audio" (in Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017, p. 3). The third V, which stands for velocity, raises very important questions about how fast social media data is generated in real time and around real-world events (ibid). It also deals with the problem of speed in relation to data collection and how this reflects on the data collection. Veracity addresses one of the largest problems related to social media data, namely, the reliability and quality of the data. The reliability, quality and accuracy of the data have become especially significant after we witnessed the power of social media in the 2016 US Presidential elections and as a result of Brexit. It raises important questions about who is who on social media, and does the social media reality reflect real world reality? The fifth V, standing for virtue, refers to the ethical issues (see Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017). Today, three years after this *Handbook* was published, ethical issues that are related to the uncontrolled use of social media users' data for different purposes, are more important than ever. Academic institutions, government organisations and many regulatory agencies are working very hard to find solutions for regulating social media platforms and solving numerous privacy issues that are in focus, especially after the Cambridge Analytica case: Value, as the last V, refers to the value that social

media data give to our understanding of the world around us, how it has enriched areas of research on topics that range from users' online behaviour on social media to political actors communication on social media.

The problems related to the volume and variety of social media data will be discussed in the following sections in more detail, because I faced many problems that are related to these two characteristics of social media data while collecting and archiving multimodal social media data for my research. Even before the advent and rise in the popularity of social media, authors were warning on the problems related to the gathering of data from Websites (Stempel & Stewart, 2000). These authors point to the dynamic and changeable content on web pages, which is why it is suggested that researchers download and store the content for researching (p. 527). They pay attention to the possible problems if the online content is not saved and archived, in the first place, they point out that “intercoder reliability is jeopardized and measurement error is magnified if coders are not working from identical content information” (ibid).

Another topic that should be thoroughly discussed and examined in future research is the new and fast developing area related to the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence in social media research. Since social media produce an enormous amount of data, big data, researchers have had to find a way to study and examine these data and these computerised methods appeared to be part of the solution. Although critiques of machine coding are numerous, questioning the accuracy and reliability of results, this research method is used more and more often.

2.4 Citizens online: for better or worse

2.4.1 Online engagement

The intention of this section is to present the potential of the internet and, in particular, of social media, for strengthening democracy. With the growth of the internet, many authors became interested in researching the possible implications it could have for democracy (Coleman, 2004; Lutz & du Toit, 2014; Norris 2001; Street, 2001). These authors believe that the internet, “because of its interactive nature, has the potential to restore the deteriorating public sphere by providing a forum in which citizens can debate issues of public concern, hold those in power accountable, and improve the existing form of democracy” (Vučković & Bebić, 2013, p. 34). Gibson, Lusoli and Ward point out that: “the online world is offering a space for political

engagement among those who might not have been otherwise active” (2005, p. 578). Pippa Norris finds that: “...the internet offers to reconnect people to the political process by helping people become more informed citizens, by helping representatives become more responsive to citizens, and by engaging more people in public policy debates” (Norris, 2001, p. 163). Furthermore, John Street believes that now, with the help of the internet, which has solved the problems of time, space, access and size, greater participation will follow (2001, p. 217). Chadwick offers a similar conclusion, “suggesting that political websites should provide the infrastructure for deliberation, and that political participation will follow” (Chadwick, 2006, p. 26). As a result of that interactive nature of Web 2.0 applications, it is justifiable to believe that Web 2.0 may have a positive impact on citizens’ political participation (Lilleker & Jackson, 2010).

Van Zoonen (2005) argues that one of the most worrying issues in today’s democracies is the distance between representatives and the represented, explaining that this distance is a breeding ground for a crisis that goes much further than straightforward political conflict. While she advocates popular culture as a rapprochement factor between representatives and the represented, many authors see exactly this potential in the internet and new media platforms (Coleman, 2003; Lutz & du Toit, 2014; Norris 2001). Coleman thus believes that “the internet is not just a new technique for political spin, but he believes in the possible role of the internet in strengthening the ties between the representatives and the represented and two-way communication with citizens” (2003, p. 12). Furthermore, there is a substantial body of literature that speculates that “the internet may strengthen civic engagement and political activism, especially for many groups that are currently marginalized from mainstream politics” (Norris, 2001, p. 170). For instance, Castells (2008), in his study, explores the potential of the internet for engagement, using the example of the Occupy Wall Street movement. He thinks that this is a good example, which demonstrates the power of the internet over the power of governments, because it shows that protesters can be removed from the streets, but not from the internet, where their voices remained clear and loud. Moreover, he finds that the internet is a platform for empowerment, participation, engagement, equality, multiculturalism, participation, deliberation and open communication, with the end objective, no less, of re-inventing democracy (ibid). Many other authors have also studied the internet’s potential for greater citizen participation and engagement (Gil de Zu’niga, Puig-i-Abril, & Rojas, 2009; Gennaro & Dutton, 2006; Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2005; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005).

At the beginning of the 2000's scholars tried to answer the question as to whether digital media could change the public sphere that is created by traditional media, print media, television and radio, which are privately or state-owned, by offering tools for "self-organization, open participation, and a counterhegemonic potential" (Couldry & Curran, 2003). Lutz and du Toit (2014) in their book *Defining Democracy in the Digital Age*, investigate the potential of Twitter as a hub for the public sphere. In their study, using sentiment analysis, they tested more than one hundred thousand tweets in order to reveal what sentiment Twitter users have towards the concept of democracy, and found that Twitter certainly has a potential for reinventing the public sphere. Moreover, if we look at some early studies on interactivity, we will find evidence that interactive messaging technologies, such as e-mail, instant messaging, online chat, and comment boards, all permit the sharing of political perspectives (Price & Cappella, 2002). Westlin saw potential for accessible and "non-commercialised" public sphere on Facebook: "As far as being a community that encourages and assists political communication, Facebook has the potential to actually exceed Habermas's expectations of a public sphere and become a major hub for political action among community members" (2007, p. 12).

Since this study relies on the idea that the internet has indeed brought many more good things than bad things, I will have the same position in relation to the impact of the internet on democracy. Before moving to the concept that will be the focus of this section, it is necessary to give a really short overview on what kind of democracy we are talking about, and what will be understood under the term 'e-democracy'. Oblak Črnič captures several theoretical discussions and empirical reflections that consider the impact of technologies on political changes as a shift towards a new shape of democracy, a new type of virtual, digital, tele-democracy, or electronic democracy (2012, p. 400). Oblak Črnič brings six different theoretical contexts for the idea of electronic democracy: futuristic predictions, early empirical projects, theorising participatory potentials, and the fourth is analysing first implementation projects, it follows that she then moves on to theorising around the deliberative potentials and latest theoretical context, which she calls conceptual convergence (2012, p. 402). In this context, we have to bear in mind that, no matter how available, user-friendly, attractive, simple, cheap, fast, and limitless the technology is, if there are no people who use it for political purposes, democracy will not be improved. It is hard to imagine that citizens would all be thrilled to engage in political life from the moment that they have the available information and the platform that enables them to participate. In this context, Bennett gave a straightforward

definition: “Internet is another communication medium” (2003, p. 19). Whether it will be used to make revolutions or for shopping, it depends on people (ibid).

Online political participation

The growing literature suggests that the internet will enable the greater participation of those who are represented. Gibson et al. point out that: “the online world is offering a space for political engagement among those who might not have been otherwise active” (2005, p. 578). In the academic literature, four dimensions of political participation are recognised: voting, campaign activity, contacting officials, and collective activities (Verba & Nie, 1972). However, due to the development of internet platforms and new forms of online participation, for a long time these traditional measures of political participation have already not been sufficient to cover the range of political activities that are available to the public in recent times. Bennett says that the internet “enables people to organise politics in ways that overcome limits of space, time, identity, and ideology, resulting in the expansion and coordination of activities that would not likely occur by other means” (2003, p. 20). Moreover, Gil de Zuniga et al. find that current conceptualisations of online political participation typically do not consider the different dimensions of online participation, such as displaying campaign slogans on personal web sites, signing up for a political news-letter, signing and forwarding an online petition, different formats, such as writing e-mails with political messages and sending them to representatives, creating videos with political messages and posting them on YouTube (2010, p. 38).

Internet facilitates the many-to-many, one-to-many, and many-to-one types of communication, which, combined, may take the behaviour of expressive participation to a place that is not easily reached by more traditional means (Castells, 2008).

Those who are still not convinced about why it is important to study online political participation, should also look at the studies that find a connection between political talk and political participation, wherein those who talk about public affairs with family and friends show a greater predisposition to engage in politically oriented activities (Pan, Shen, Paek, & Sun, 2006), but bearing in mind at the same time those studies which show that online talk does not differ from face-to-face discussions in its participatory influence and effectiveness (Shah et al., 2005). Moreover, it has been demonstrated in some studies that when different scales of engagement and measures of the internet use are employed, the connection between offline and online engagement is positive, and there are perhaps significant results (Bimber, 2001). In this

context, Gil de Zeniga et al., in their study on political blogging, conducted an online survey among 3,909 blog readers of 40 bloggers, and they found that frequent internet use, at least for those reading blogs, appears to promote greater political talk and participation. An important finding from their study indicates that political blog talk does not preclude, but rather accompanies, political face-to-face talk, which is in contradiction to many pessimistic views that suggest that online communication will completely replace face-to-face communication and, in that way, will erode social capital (see Putman, 1995; Doheny-Farina, 1996). In this sense, Breindl and Francq, in an analysis of an online survey that was answered by internet users, find that information and discussion are important issues for Web users (2008, p. 28). Moreover, they conclude that Web 2.0 applications may be useful for Web surfers to become more engaged in political issues (ibid).

Yet there are also studies that have found either a negative or insignificant relationship between internet use and offline participation, suggesting that online political communication will not foster “real” action or offline activity, which is often seen as the only effective political act (Putnam, 2000; Best & Krueger, 2005; Bimber, 2001, 2003; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2004; Xenos & Moy, 2007). However, in this study, we will look at online participation as a completely independent new form of political engagement, and not as some kind of predictor or stimulus for offline engagement. Moreover, online political participation, in this study, is perceived as being a valuable and self-sufficient form of engagement that is autonomous from expectations relating to offline participation. Hence, many studies demonstrate that the internet, because of many benefits, such as reduced costs of engagement and no time and space limits, can drive individuals into political life through different new forms of political engagement, which range through gathering political information, connecting with others, mobilising, and recruiting individuals to causes and actions, expressing political views on the internet; commenting on an article on a web portal; following politics on Facebook, Twitter, etc.; sending a message with political content via FB, Twitter, etc.; visiting the web page of a political party; inclusion in an interest group through online networks (Hafner Fink & Oblak Črnič, 2014; Leizerov, 2000; Norris, 2001; Resnick, 2004; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Moreover, many scholars believe that information and communication technologies have the potential to mobilise citizens and empower them to exercise influence on decision-making processes and public policy (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Castells, 2012; Mason, 2012; Palczewski, 2001). Relying on the idea that political participation is at the heart of a healthy and well-functioning democracy (Davis, 1999; Mutz, 2002), studying the role of the personalisation of political communication, followed by

its implementation on social media networks, in engaging citizens online, appears to be indispensable. A significant number of studies researching political participation have as their focus initiatives and activities that have been initiated by citizens (for example, see Uldam & Vestergaard, 2015).

Obviously, these two opposite theories are insufficient to explain the real state of affairs in regard to the roles of the internet and social media in empowering civic engagement. I believe that the definition of the role of the internet in society and politics that was provided by Bennett, even before the appearance of the most popular social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, is still suited to explaining what the power of these new media is. He contended that: “the internet is not inherently transformative of either human communication or social and political relations. Rather, it is the interaction between the internet and its’ users - and their interactions, in turn, in material social contexts – that constitute the matrix within which we can locate the power of the new media to create new spaces for discourse and coordinated action” (2003, p. 26). Later on, Bennett and Segerberg (2012), in relation to the advent of social networking sites, developed the theory of connective action that is based on personalised content sharing across media networks. The authors say that people now can express their opinions online without being a part of a formal organisation. They discuss how people who are commenting, liking, sharing, are already engaged in political activity. According to Bennett and Segerberg (ibid) this diffuse political energy still has to be bundled to become effective.

Social media engagement

Gerodimos and Justinussen (2014) are among the first researchers to study the connection between the content and rhetoric that is used in Facebook posts, including photographs and interactivity that is expressed in the form of likes, shares and comments. Gerodimos and Justinussen (2014) define communication on Facebook as posting content, on the one hand, and reacting to that content by using social buttons, on the other (2014, p. 11). Further, they explain why people like something, saying that ‘like’ is an expression of the endorsement of posted content, an expression of affirmation, and an acceptance of what is said in the post. Gerlitz and Halmond (2013, p. 5) say that ‘like’, in some, stands for “congratulations” and “awesome” (in Gerodimos & Justinussen 2014, p. 11). Although these authors’ explanations are reasonable, it does not have to be true at all times, meaning that ‘like’ is actually not always endorsement, and the ‘liking’ of what is said, can also be explained only as an expression of “wanting to react”. For that reason, users have, for a long time, been asking Facebook to introduce a ‘dislike’

button, but that request has never been accepted. Instead, Facebook offered six different emotions in 2016. Obviously, 'liking', before these new reactions were rolled-out, and 'liking' afterwards are somewhat different. From 2016 onwards, everyone could instead only use the like button and six different emoji-based reactions, which include "love", "haha", "yay", "wow", "sad" and "angry", followed with the matching emoji picture. These authors further say, that "a post with many interactions has evidently grabbed more attention and spread more widely, whereas a post with fewer interactions has not been deemed worthy or interesting to engage with (ibid)" and I will be using this interpretation for explaining number of likes in my study.

Sharing is also a way of engaging (Gerodimos & Justinussen 2014). It can be said that sharing is stronger way of engagement in comparison with liking, because it is assumed that in sharing something you also want others to get the piece of information that you have shared. In this constellation, commenting can be considered to be the strongest way of "reacting" on Facebook, because it assumes an action that is more demanding than only pressing one "button". Gerodimos and Justinussen (2014) conclude their discussion with open questions, asking what motivation, meaning and importance there is behind interacting in this way, i.e., what one 'like' really means, and does it mean anything? Carlisle and Patton in their innovative and interesting study during the 2008 US Presidential elections conducted research among Facebook users (2013). They did not find any significant correlations between Facebook use and political participation, online and offline, authors suggest that depending on development of active political Facebook users they firmly anticipate Facebook interaction to be a standard measure of online political activity (2013, p. 892). Secondly, some previous research (Park & Perry, 2008) found that political parties and candidates web pages are used in the first place to engage already engaged voters, which would indeed make sense if we think of the important rubrics on web pages, such as: donating money, sending political e-mails, persuading other to vote, volunteering, participating at the partisan activities. Although the same research confirmed that campaign websites have a direct effect on political engagement, social media, by their nature, have a much greater potential for reaching different groups and individuals than web pages do. The presence of social media in people's daily lives and their potential role in facilitating more direct and interactive communication between politicians and citizens, is growing, as the number of users is increasing, together with the number of different social media platforms. For these reasons, I have not included web pages in my research, but only social media pages of selected politicians.

2.4.2 Internet as a remedy for, or amplifier of, trivialisation

Many citizens believe that governments make decisions like private clubs, without the engagement of the citizens, who can no longer find any connection between the process of governing and their own elective vote (Hain, 2003). It is believed that contemporary trends in the field of political media coverage, as well as trends in political communication, sometimes regarded as “spin democracy” stressing a high inclusion of media logic in the political process, have resulted in general distrust of political institutions, citizens’ scepticism, disengagement and corrosive cynicism (Entman, 1989; Hart, 1994; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Schechter, 1997). In this context, Coleman (2004) finds that the commercialisation of the media market has led to the notions that: 1) the expectation that news and topics of public interest should compete with other news for better ratings, 2) the time reserved for the coverage of politics is decreasing, and that the time for real political analysis is much shorter, 3) the professional journalists are trapped in the world of political messages and event managers, so the news fight is actually a fight between rival public relations manipulators, 4) finally, inside this tiny political sphere citizens have become merely coincidental passers-by, who scan and jangle. Hence, it is not surprising that, in this new environment, the interest in issues of public interest has gradually decreased (Pattie et al, 2003). This trend in the public sphere is one of the arguments that has led us to the conclusion that democracy is in crisis (ibid), and that public officials in a democratic culture should offer new solutions for stimulating citizens’ interest in issues of public interest. As a result, many authors express concern as a result of the rising distrust in the functioning of crucial institutions which are at the core of the representative democracies in which most of us live today (Norris, 2001; Moisés, 2006; McLaren, 2007; Van De Walle & Six, 2014). The Eurobarometer is just one standard piece of research whose results relating to public opinion in the European Union show a constant low trust in governments and other political institutions. For instance, in 2016, only 27% of the examinees said that they believed in their national government, while more than 70% said they did not trust their government (Standard Eurobarometer 85, spring 2016, p. 14).

With the advent of the 2016 Presidential elections in the US, and of Brexit in the UK, scholars, experts, and the media, began to talk more than ever about the distrust in politics in general. Words that have often been mentioned in the past three years are information crisis, fake news, disinformation, misinformation, mal-information, alternative facts, echo chambers, filter

bubbles and, especially worrying, the term post-truth. All these words come with negative meanings and far-reaching consequences. All these terms are also related to the internet and social media, which are seen as the amplifiers and major tools and platforms from which all these negative trends are beginning to take place. The seriousness of these trends mirrors the appearance of many regulatory and advisory organisations, and the publishing of so many reports that are trying to find solutions to these negative trends. Some of these organisations are the LSE Commission on Truth, Trust and Technology (LSE), the High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (HLEG, European Commission), The International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN, Poynter Institute for Media Studies), and many others. In this thesis, I do not enter into debates about these negative trends. Yet it is relevant to mention the directions in which these new developments are going. For more extensive debates on these trends, please see Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Kakutani, 2018; Newman et al., 2019; Pariser, 2011.

However, many believe that the internet has brought better, rather than worse to our society, especially to its citizens, who now have a much louder and stronger voice than they had before. In the next section, the pros and cons of the role of the internet will be elaborated. Today, our dependency on the internet is undeniable. While most of us could renounce the traditional media, television, newspapers and radio, we could hardly do the same for the internet. When thinking about this, I always remember the revised version of Maslow's famous hierarchy of human needs that is presented in the annual report of UM's *Wave*, which is the world's largest and longest-running social media research study. The results of this study, which covers 75 countries in total and represents the views, needs and behaviours of 1.3 billion of the world's most influential internet and social media users, show that fundamental human needs are now dependent on our ability to go online (Wave 8, 2016, p. 53). Bearing this in mind, and with the functions that the internet definitely has and which can be employed in political life, it is not surprising that many believed that the internet would cure chronic distrust in politics (Breindl & Francq, 2008; Coleman, 2004; Norris, 2001). At this point, Norris separates only some among the many functions: disseminating information on government activities, as well as disseminating information on public services, providing citizen response mechanisms, facilitating more direct participation in the decision-making process, and providing direct support for the democratic process, such as online voting (see Norris, 2001).

The argument that advocates the role of the internet in reconnecting fellow citizens and invigorating civic engagement is two-fold: first, the internet seems to have the potential to

engage people in public discussion about issues of common concern, thus bringing politics back to the people and restoring the public sphere (Coleman & Hall, 2001); secondly, the internet is believed to have the capacity to restore broken social ties (Bebić & Grbeša, 2007). Chadwick finds that the internet emerges as: “a medication for the perceived ills of modern society: isolation, fragmentation, competitive individualism, the erosion of local identities, the decline of traditional religious and family structures, and the downplaying of emotional forms of attachment and communication” (2006, p. 26). Coleman noted that “the democratic deficit is facing many governments, and that two key questions arise from that: How to make the political process more participatory; and how can public engagement in policies that affect everyday life become more deliberative?” (Coleman, 2003, p. 11). Hence, Coleman believed that “the new ICTs could contribute to a renewed faith in government bodies through the creation of a more transparent, interactive government that is engaged in a wide dialogue with an interactive citizenry” (ibid). Similarly, Vacarri finds that today, because of the emergence of online platforms, we have hybridised models of “top-down strategic control and bottom-up civic empowerment during political campaigns” (2010, p. 327).

Yet these enthusiastic conceptions of the internet face several problems: “It has been argued that the ties that bind members of a virtual community are not as strong as the old ties of family, locality, religion, or even political structures, like local party and lobby group associations. The internet, in this view, takes the impersonality of modern society to a new level, substituting a diluted form of community and social capital for the real things” (Doheny-Farina, 1996, in Chadwick, 2006, p. 27). The argument basically comes down to Robert Putnam’s idea that the only functional community is one based on face-to-face communication (1994, 1995). Besides, face-to-face interaction usually imposes the well-known demands for basic civility (2006, p. 27). Andrew Chadwick argues that all kinds of prejudices find fertile ground in the online sphere, because individuals can hide behind the cloak of anonymity or pseudonym (ibid). To put it simply, he believes that in cyberspace, because they can be anonymous, people do not impose the demands of basic civility (2006, p. 27). Some early studies about the role of the internet in politics also arrive at pessimistic conclusions, mainly about the impact of the internet on cynicism, where cynicism has been defined as distrust in the political system (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Acknowledging the interactivity as an important characteristic of the internet, Splichal, at the same time, stresses the shortcomings of interactivity. He (2009, p. 400) finds that new communication technologies enable many people [to] express [an] opinion as [to] receive them. But he also emphasised that immediately does not mean and effectively.

Moreover, some authors find that the dominant content of the internet is, at best, that of hedonistic entertainment, that not only inhibits the growth of the personal identities and social intelligence that are needed to develop individuals as autonomous social and political actors, but, at worst, it serves as the functional equivalent of an anaesthetic, an opiate that dulls the senses of thought, understanding and critical thinking (Lutz & du Toit, 2014, p. 117).

On the other hand, logically, candidates and their strategists saw the internet as a channel for direct communication, through which they could circumvent traditional news filters to get their message straight to the public (Whillock, 1997, p. 1216). Today, in the realm of social media, we have the most recent example of Donald Trump, who used this method in the 2016 Presidential elections in the United States in the most sophisticated way, micro-targeting voters with Facebook ads referring to a specific theme that maybe concerns only one hundred people. Not only that, but he used Facebook for targeting his voters and used micro-targeting to discourage his opponents' voters, African Americans and women, confusing them with ads containing the caption: "Hillary Thinks African Americans are Super Predators" (Becket, 2017, October 9). Although some early studies of social media were enthralled with the victory of Barack Obama and how he used social media to win the elections, and thus proclaimed the great potential of these platforms for reinvigorating the public sphere, ten years later, cyber pessimists will say that all we got from social media is the rise of fake news, misinformation, malformation and alternative facts, a stronger polarisation driven by the existence of online echo chambers and filter bubbles. Many also will say that social media are only one new tool that serves the elites in controlling and taking up the surveillance of citizens.

In this chapter the process of mediatisation of politics was discussed alongside with the changes in the media environment that occurred with the rise of social media. Secondly, the phenomenon of personalisation of politics with the focus being on personalisation of political communication is elaborated. In this context, main key drivers of personality politics were elaborated likewise privatisation and popularisation of politics as sub-dimensions of personalisation. The third part of the theoretical chapter is dedicated to political communication on social media, that, because of their nature, personalise political communication even more (Ekman & Widhlof, 2014; Metz et al, 2019; Vergeer et al, 2013). Finally, drawing on the notion that the internet in general and social media in particular have the potential to bring politics closer to citizens, the chapter ends with the discussion about citizens' online engagement. It argues that commenting on

political posts, 'liking' and sharing political content may be regarded as new forms of online engagement.

In the following chapter the personalisation of politics will be discussed in the context of three different countries, two established democracies, the US and the UK and one post-socialist democracy, Croatia. Also, the usage of the internet and social media in these countries will be briefly discussed in three separate subchapters to adequately contextualise the study of personalisation of politics on social media in these three countries.

3 PERSONALISATION OF POLITICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN CONTEXT: THE CASES OF THE US, THE UK AND CROATIA

Context is always one of the grounding factors in studying many theories, phenomena and concepts in the social sciences. The personalisation of political communication is one of these phenomena that are context-dependent. In different contexts, different levels and natures of the personalisation of political communication will be found. This is one of the reasons why, in this research, different countries have been chosen to study personalisation on social media, the United States, the United Kingdom and Croatia. As already mentioned, the personalisation thesis has been widely studied in the context of Western democracies, namely the UK and the US (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Langer, 2011; Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Stanyer, 2013; Thompson, 2000; Webb & Poguntke, 2012) while studies on the personalisation of politics in the context of post-socialist countries, namely Croatia, are not that common (Grbeša, 2004; 2008; 2010; Šimunjak, 2014; 2017). Also, most of the existing studies examine personalisation as increasing media attention on individual politicians, while the strategic dimension of personalisation is less studied. Hence, the intention of this study is to examine how is the phenomenon of personalisation of political communication manifested in two developed western democracies, the UK and the US, and one post-socialist country, Croatia, in a controlled media environment, on the most popular social media platform Facebook (Clement, 2019, August 2). Bearing in mind the differences in political systems, in political and media culture of selected countries, the comparison is made only on the level of Facebook communication for the former President of the US Barack Obama, former UK Prime Minister David Cameron and former Croatian President Ivo Josipović. Selected cases are suitable for the comparison on the level of Facebook communication because the main features and infrastructure of Facebook as a social media is the same in all three cases, the time-frames in which examined posts were published overlap for all three cases from 2013 to 2015, while in the case of Obama and Josipović the overlapping period is even longer (from 2010 to 2015); also, all three politicians were incumbents in the examined periods but also running for the second terms in the office.

The analysis of the context for every selected country includes main characteristics of the political system because it is assumed that different institutional settings may represent different contexts for the personalisation of political communication (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000) previous studies on personalisation in the selected countries, a short context for the politician whose. Also, given that the empirical analysis will be conducted at the level of Facebook

communication and relying on a previously discussed idea that social media foster personalisation (see section 2.3.3), this chapter offers a brief overview of the use of internet and social media in each of the three countries.

In the context of three key drivers of the personalisation of politics, which are a changing media environment, the process of modernisation and a changing political system, the specificities of each country related to one of the key drivers will be tackled. The role of the US as a leader and inventor of changes in the media environment, the media and communication trends and changes that are spreading worldwide will be stressed. The process of modernisation will be briefly touched upon related to the case of the UK. Lastly, Croatia is an interesting case to be studied in the context of a changing political system because, in the last two decades, the Croatian political system has changed a few times.

3.1 Personalisation of politics and use of social media in the US

Bennett and Entman recognised the United States as different from other democracies in several important respects, including: “the number and levels of governmental institutions, the unusual election and campaign financing procedures, and a media system unrivalled in its commercial basis and relative lack of government regulation” (2001, p. xx). The US political system is very complex. The US is a federal constitutive republic, in which the President, Congress and Federal Courts share powers. There is a strict separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. The party system is dominated by two major parties: The Republican Party and the Democratic Party. In the context of personalisation, it “has often been argued that presidential systems focus the attention on the presidents, and on the candidates for the presidency, which implies both a greater amount of personalization of politics in general and a greater concentration of attention on the top leaders than in parliamentary systems. The particular case of the US illustrates the impact of a presidential system on personalization” (Kriesi, 2011, p. 827). Authors also find that, in the highly personalised nature of the American political system, it is normal for politicians to publicly reveal elements from their private life and to appear with family members in a private setting (Holtz-Bacha, 2004; McAllister, 2015).

The media system in the United States is highly commercialised and market-driven (Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2006, p. 133). The public service media sector is limited (ibid). In this system of intensified media competition and the fight for the readers and viewers, media logic has

pervaded everything (Brants & van Praag, 2006). Some new “values”– sensationalism, horse-race reporting, cynicism, conflict and drama, negativity and interpretative journalism, focus on political leaders and personalities, replaced what was considered to be professional journalism – objectivity in reporting, fact-based reporting, focus on issues and political programs, and so on. Like most other changes related to the media, communication and technology, this change also first happened in the US. Delli Carpini and Williams find that these changes are, to a great extent, related to technological development from television to the growth of the internet and World Wide Web, the horizontal and vertical integration of the media through conglomerates, and so forth (2001, p. 166).

Another change that happened, which was partially caused by the technological changes, was the convergence of types of media, the ownership of media and media genres (ibid). Delli Carpini and Williams further explain that these changes, followed by the economic changes caused by ruthless commercialisation and a hunger for profit created “a hostile environment for the always fragile distinction between entertainment and public affairs” (2001, p. 166). Consequently, audiences absorbed these changes and ‘fanned’ entertainment over public affairs. In this context, Wattenberg brings in a comparison of how media habits that were related to informing the public about the presidents have dramatically changed over recent decades (2004). He finds that “69% of the public read a newspaper every day in the early 1970s, and by the time G. W. Bush assumed office in 2001 only about 40% did so” (2004, p. 558). The number of people who said they watched the nightly news on a regular basis also almost halved, from 58% in the Nixon era to 32% in Bush’s era (ibid). While the interest of the audiences in public affairs undoubtedly decreased in favour of entertainment, the ways to consume news have also been dramatically changing.

It was already discussed that media play a crucial role in the process of personalisation of politics. In American political history, there are extraordinary examples of candidates and presidents who were adopting and adapting to the medium of the time so smoothly and proficiently. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first President who delivered radio addresses and established, through these weekly radio addresses that were known also as fireside chats, what is today known as The Weekly Address of the President of the United States (Geoffrey, 2007). John. F. Kennedy is known as the first TV President. The first televised debate in the US, which happened in 1960 between JFK and Richard M. Nixon, decided the winner of those Presidential elections. That TV debate becomes famous, not just because Kennedy became President after

he appeared to be much better than Nixon on TV, but because it practically announced on live television the change that was coming, the moment after which nothing was the same in running politics (Schroeder, 2008). Private lives of the Kennedy family were in the focus of global publics. The media all around the world were interested in JFK's love life, the rumours about his affair with Marilyn Monroe, his wife's Jackie Kennedy fashion style and so on. The tragedies that the family suffered still capture the attention of the media and publics. The next crucial moment, which plastically demonstrates the dramatic changes in how politics is perceived, is the election of Ronald Reagan, 40th US President, in 1981, who was a well-known Hollywood actor prior to his presidency. Ronald Reagan was among the first presidents who were perceived as more popular than their party, the Republican party (McAllister, 2007). Other presidents in American political history personalised politics even more. Bill Clinton is also often mentioned in the context of personalisation. He was handy with combining elements of popular culture with his political appearance, like when he appeared in the popular Arsenio Hall talk show, playing the saxophone during his campaign of 1992 (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000).

Finally, we get to Barack Hussein Obama. Barack Obama will always be remembered in American, but also world history, as the first Afro-American President of the United States. He will also be remembered as the first social media President. Barack Obama came to power in 2008 as a candidate of Democratic party in the US. He was re-elected in 2012 and stayed in office till the end of his term in 2016. If you were to ask someone to tell you something about Obama in three sentences, you would probably hear: he is the first US Afro-American President, he is the first who took advantage of social media and the internet in his campaigns, and his wife, Michelle Obama, had a great sense of fashion. One of his quotes speaks for itself and reveals how aware he was of the importance of managing communication in the right way.

Barack Obama:

"When you start governing, there is a tendency sometimes for me to start thinking, 'As long as I get the policy right then that's what should matter. I think that one thing that I do need to constantly remind myself and my team is, it's not enough just to build the better mousetrap,' he continued. 'People don't automatically come beating to your door. We've got to sell it, we've got to reach out to the other side and where possible persuade. And I think there are times, there's no doubt about it, where, you know, I think we have not been successful in going out there and letting people know what it is that we are trying to do and why this is the right direction'" (Liptak, 2015, December 21).

Of course, a lot more needs to be said about Barack Obama, his presidency, his campaigns, his persona, his legacy. However, in this study we will focus on his communication on social media (see also section 2.3.3), more specifically to what extent he personalised the communication on his Facebook fan page, and why he is called the “social media President” (Katz, Barris & Jain, 2013).

This section briefly discusses the use of the internet and social media given that the analysis of personalisation of political communication in following chapters will take place in the context of social media. The development and popularity of the internet and social media came in the right moment for Obama. “During the 1996 Presidential campaign, only about 10% of American adults said they got some political news or information from the internet” (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 30). In 2010, 22% of Americans used social networking sites for political purposes (Smith, 2011, January 27), while only seven years later, in 2017, these numbers had tripled, and 67% of adult Americans had used social media to get news (Shearer & Gottfried, 2017). When looking specifically at the time periods that will be included in this research it is visible that for instance in 2012, over 80% of American adults were online, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2014, p. 31). Furthermore, among these internet users, over 90% reported that they read e-mail or used a search engine to find information. It is significant to report that 66% used a social networking site, like Facebook, and in August 2011, when the research was conducted, 60% of Americans read political information online (ibid). Moreover, the results show that during the 2012 Presidential campaign, 60% of Americans used social media to express their thoughts about politics and to read the political views of others (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 32). Internet penetration and social media usage in the US is among the highest in the world from when the first studies of internet use were conducted. For instance, from 2008 to 2016, the percentage of the population using the internet in the US was between 74% and 85% (Clement, 2020, January 7).

Studies about the role of the new media in the 2008 and 2012 Presidential elections in the US are excessive (Bimber, 2014; Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Gerodimos and Justinussen, 2015; Katz, Barris & Jain, 2013; Goodnow, 2013; Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Stromer-Galley, 2014). Most of them investigate how new technologies have changed the way campaigns are conducted, and how citizens engage by using these new platforms. Stromer-Galley (2014), in her essential book, gives an extensive overview of new media use in five US elections from 1996 to 2012. The author focuses on the argument that the ways politicians and their staff use

Digital Communication Technologies ultimately serves to benefit the candidate, while a greater genuine democratisation is not on their agenda (2014, p. 3). While many scholars find that in many cases social media are still used for marketing and promotional purposes, for image building, for promoting programs and issues, many others think that, in the US elections, social networking sites have emerged in the last decade as online campaign tools for promoting participatory democracy (Gulati & Williams, 2013, p. 578).

These peculiarities make the US a rich base for studying the ways in which information is delivered to publics by social media, and for evaluating the impact of such communication on citizens' online engagement (ibid). Moreover, it makes the US an interesting case for comparison with other countries.

3.2 Personalisation of politics and social media use in the UK

The UK is a constitutional monarchy, where the Queen is Head of State, while the Prime Minister is the Head of the Government (Blackburn, 1995). The most important and powerful legislative body is the UK Parliament, which consists of two legislative parliamentary bodies – the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Members of the House of Lords are not elected, they are mostly ennobled by the Queen, although some hereditary peers still sit in the House of Lords, and 26 Anglican Bishops, including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, while members of the House of Commons are elected by free and democratic parliamentary elections that are held a maximum of five years apart (ibid). Elected members of the Parliament are usually members of some political party, although after the 2017 General Election there were 31 independent members. The UK has a multiparty system, which is dominated by two parties: the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. The dominance of these two parties is maintained by the first-past-the-post electoral system that is used for general elections (ibid).

Although the ties between these parties and parts of their electorate are still very strong, the process of modernisation has left its mark. The role of political parties has undoubtedly weakened over the past few decades, thus pushing individuals to the fore. Party leaders and candidates started becoming more and more important. Testing how important leaders really are in parliamentary systems, like the UK's system, which are considered to be less prone to the process of personalisation than presidential systems (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000), is always challenging, as is discussed in this thesis. However, although “parliamentary systems are

generally expected to be characterized by a lesser degree of general personalization than semi-presidential systems, the ‘presidentialisation’ thesis predicts that, even in parliamentary systems, there is an increasing focus on the top political leaders. Moreover, in the UK, the concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet is likely to enhance both general personalization and the focus on the top leaders” (Kriesi, 2011, p. 828).

The context of a parliamentary democracy that has championed changes in political communication in Europe and that has evidently succumbed to mediatisation, makes the UK a relevant case for studying online personalisation. The United Kingdom is one of the cradles of developments in political communication. Also, the UK is among the most used examples for studying personalisation of politics. It is found that many postwar British prime ministers have accumulated considerably greater power and authority when compared to their prewar counterparts (King 1994). In the context of personalisation of power and media personalisation, one of the most important persons is Margaret Thatcher who was the leader of the Conservative party and UK Prime Minister from 1979 till 1990. McAllister, for instance, finds that in that period the personalisation of electoral behaviour was much higher than usual (2007). Although it is found that Thatcher’s private life was not very visible in the media (Stanyer, 2013), the media personalisation was increasing. For instance, Langer (2007), in her extensive study, shows that the media visibility of British Prime Ministers between 1945 and 1999 increased. Mughan also analysed print and television coverage to test the Presidentialisation thesis in the UK and found that ‘the cumulation of evidence confirms that recent British general elections have indeed Presidentialized in terms of both presentation and impact’ (2000, p. 129).

Some of the first and best-known communication strategists and spin doctors come from the UK. Some of them are Alastair Campbell and Peter Mandelson, who were the spin doctors for Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, who were both Labour party leaders and former Prime Ministers, while on the Tories’ side the equivalents were Tim Bell and Charles Lewington. Tim Bell, who worked for Margaret Thatcher, became famous for the iconic 1979 election poster "Labour isn't working" (Craig, 2019, August 26). The fact that many developments in political communication have occurred in the UK, is only one among many reasons which make this country a most interesting case for studying political communication and make it especially exciting for studying the personalisation of political communication.

It is widely discussed that personalisation and privatisation in the UK are to a great extent driven by the media, especially the tabloids (Kriesi, 2011). One of the reasons for that is the media system in the UK characterised by Hallin & Mancini (2004) as a liberal model, meaning that the press is strongly commercialised, and market-driven, while government regulation is minimal. In the kind of media environment where newspapers have an ideological leaning, media reporting has become personalised and, as Šimunjak suggests, it has made the UK “a benchmark for exploring trends in other contexts” (2017, p. 479). However, in this context, Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) stress that the British case is unique because it marks signs of resistance to the process of mediatisation. These authors emphasise that in the UK, politics fights not to be absorbed by the media and to keep its centrality in the nation’s life. In addition to that, the first-ever televised Prime Ministerial Debate happened in 2010 (Picheta, 2019, November 19). Televised debates between candidates for the office, which are one of the most popular TV formats in political programs, are also considered to be a proof of mediatisation because it makes candidates adapt and adjust completely to media logic. Since they arrived in the UK for the first time in 2010, it shows that politics in the UK does indeed fight the process of mediatisation. Yet the same fact shows that the fight against media absorption is often futile. The argument is supported by the fact that the three debates which were held between the main party leaders: Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg, and that were aired on ITV, Sky and the BBC, “were seen by millions, reaching more voters than any other episodic televised campaign coverage, and had dominated the election campaign, particularly the news media coverage” (Graham et al., 2013, p. 698).

One of these trends is also privatisation. Langer found in her extensive study that in Britain, the levels of privatisation depend on the characteristics of the candidates (2011). She gives an example of former prime minister Tony Blair who was very eager to use his private life for public purposes. Some examples have already been given, like when he showed his youngest son Leo or when British tabloids wrote about his underpants. On the other hand, his successor, Gordon Brown, was not very skilled with the techniques of privatisation of politics (Langer, 2011). Although his advisers tried to present him as relaxed and fun, that did not work well, because he was not authentic in that. At the same time, Langer finds that David Cameron, similarly to Tony Blair, did not hesitate to use private cues in the campaign, and that he was good while doing that because he was young, charismatic and informal (ibid). Moreover, he spent one day with *The Sun*’s journalists in his official home at 10 Downing Street, revealing in front of the cameras how his day started and ended. Also, on one occasion he said: “I’m

asking people a very big thing, which is to elect me as their Prime Minister. And I think people have a right to know a bit more about you, your life and your family, what makes you tick, and what informs your thinking. And to me, nothing informs my thinking more than family” (Langer, 2010, p. 61). David Cameron, for instance, openly talked about the illness and the death of his son Ivan, who died in 2009 at the age of six. Relying on these notions, the intention of this study is to investigate to which extent did David Cameron, during his terms, use his Facebook fan page to reveal his personal and private life.

David Cameron came to power in 2010 as a leader of the Conservative party. As a prime minister, he led a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government from 2010 until 2015. In 2015 he won his second term and continued as Prime Minister from May 2015 leading a Conservative government. However, he resigned as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party, leaving 10 Downing Street on 13 July 2016. His resignation was caused by the result of the referendum in which British people voted to leave the EU. Although Cameron was the one who enabled the referendum to happen, he led the campaign for the UK to remain in the EU and resigned when that did not happen. Cameron opened his first official Facebook fan page in 2013. In the beginning, he had problems with getting likes on his page, and he was even accused of “buying” likes by using Facebook ads (Hern, 2014, March 10). His Facebook fan page became much more popular in 2015. Yet although Cameron was not keen to use Facebook in his first mandate, he used Twitter, which he joined in 2010, and has used ever since. It is interesting to note that Jim Messina, Obama’s campaign manager, was hired by the Conservative party and David Cameron for the 2015 elections. In the context of professionalisation of political campaigns which, amongst other things, understands hiring experts in campaigns – strategists, public relation consultants, spin doctors, speech writers, advertising agencies, web managers, pollsters and campaign managers - campaign managers are found to be especially important persons. As mentioned, Jim Messina was a campaign manager and social media strategist in Obama’s second campaign in 2012, and he is often given credit for Obama’s win in that election. Bearing in mind that by 2012 the enthusiasm from the 2008 campaign had faded, and Obama had to find a way to attract voters once again. His campaign manager found that way on social media and helped Obama be re-elected. Since then, Messina has been a very popular speaker at communication conferences worldwide. The UK Conservative Party hired him before the 2015 British election, in order to “bring to their operation the same binding marriage of social media and political organization that many in the US credit with securing Mr. Obama a second term” (Stratton, 2013 cited in Enli, 2017, p. 52).

Being able to compare the online communication of two different politicians in power, in different countries with different political systems, but with the same campaign manager and social media strategist, is a unique opportunity that will be utilised in this thesis.

Digitalisation of political campaigns, and political communication in general, experienced a swing in the UK, as it did in other countries worldwide. The internet penetration rate among UK citizens is also 94.9%, which is among the highest in the world (Internet World Stats, 2019 March). The number of Facebook users is also among the highest in the world, and, according to the Internet World Stats, 44 million UK citizens had a profile or a fan page on Facebook in 2018 (ibid). In the period that will be examined in this thesis the usage of the internet and Facebook was also among the highest in the world. Internet penetration in 2013 was 87%, while it was reported that 79% of adults accessed Facebook on a daily basis and 44% accessed Twitter (Office for National Statistics, 2013). In 2016 the household internet penetration rate was 89% (Johnson, 2020, February 14). It is also reported that, for instance, in 2015 73% of people used online sources for getting news, while 36% specifically referred to social media as their news sources (Newman et al, 2019). Following, Smith finds that citizens are now more eager to use Facebook and other online social networking sites to engage in campaigns, to interact with and obtain information from others (Smith, 2011). Social media have empowered citizens and enabled them to participate in many new ways in the political processes, including going online to read political news, and to view official campaign videos, messages from their candidates and so on. For that reason, it is important for politicians to be on social media and to use it on a daily basis to get closer to their electorate.

3.3 Personalisation of politics and use of social media in Croatia

Croatia is a young democracy, one of the successors of Communist Yugoslavia. It is a country with a very complex history, full of conflicts, wars, changing regimes and different rulers. Like other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Croatia has a socialist past, which makes her an intriguing case in which to study the personalisation of politics. Croatia was one of the constitutive republics of the Yugoslav federation until June 25th 1991, when the Croatian parliament declared its independence. Conflicts that preceded the declaration of independence now escalated into a brutal war. The rebellion of the Serbian nationalists, supported by the federal army and the regime of Slobodan Milošević, began open aggression which lasted until August 1995 (Silber & Little, 1996). In these long years, Croatia, as well as Serbia, suffered

enormous human losses, more than 300,000 people had to leave their homes and the material losses were tremendous. The war finally ended with the military operation ‘Storm’ (*Oluja*) in August 1995, when Croatia liberated most of its territory. The war ended, but the consequences of the war, which had many faces, flooded Croatian society. One of these consequences was a pronounced concentration of political power in the hands of the first Croatian President, Franjo Tuđman, who was elected twice to that position, for the first time in 1992, and for a second time in 1997. The “Semi-Presidential system and Tuđman’s uncontested authority within HDZ, combined with the authoritarian political style (Henjak, Zakošek & Čular, 2013, p. 452)” allowed him to control almost all of the institutions in the country. Furthermore, “Not only did Franjo Tuđman effectively control all state institutions and organisations, but he intervened in civil society, kept the media under firm control, and even shaped popular culture” (Jović & Lamont, 2010, p. 1613).

Zakošek points to explanations which were politically even more important in understanding why the semi-Presidential system was introduced after HDZ won, with a strong majority, in the first constitutional elections in 1990 (2002, pp. 111-112). The most often mentioned explanation lies in the figure of the first President, dr. Tuđman. Franjo Tuđman, who was convinced of his historical mission to constitute an independent Croatian state, while bearing in mind his role models, the French President, De Gaulle, and the American President, Washington (Zakošek, 2002, p. 112). That vision was the rock on which his aspirations towards the “... institution of a directly elected President who will have tremendous constitutional authorities for independent political acting and making all important political decisions, while daily politics will be managed by the government and head of the government” (ibid). Secondly, the “post-titoistic⁷ system and the practice of “collective leadership” needed to be abandoned” (ibid). On the one hand, Tito ruled with his strong charisma, but, at the same time, the institution of the “collective leadership” and collective responsibility was present on all levels in the political system. Due to this, Tuđman thought that strong leadership embodied in one person was required. Thirdly, weak institutional arrangements within HDZ, which at that time was more of a movement than a party, needed authority from a strong, charismatic leader, who would resolve the fragmentations in the party that were happening frequently. The position of the President in the semi-Presidential system would allow him to overcome all these problems

⁷ Post-Titoistic refers to the period after Josip Broz Tito died.

and to establish strong leadership, with all of the major political powers, being guaranteed by the Constitution.

Franjo Tuđman succeeded in his intentions. He won the elections in 1992 with 56.7 % of the votes, and in 1997 with 60.3 %. The fact that HDZ, led by him, won the parliamentary elections in 1992 and 1995, gave him even more confidence to rule with great authority and political powers. The period of his presidencies was characterised by many undemocratic decisions. For instance, in his second mandate, he refused to confirm the elected mayor of the City of Zagreb four times (Zakošek, 2002, p. 113). The laws were designed in such a way as to allow him this kind of manoeuvre and arbitrariness. International organisations were warning about the bad state of human rights, and the fact that almost all of the media were controlled by the government. After Tuđman died in 1999, a coalition of leftist parties, led by the SDP, won the elections in January 2000, and improved many aspects of political life. In November 2000, the semi-Presidential system was abandoned in order to introduce the parliamentary system of government and a proportional electoral system that has not since changed (Zakošek, 2002). Two weeks later, Presidential elections were held. Although everyone believed that the next Croatian President would be Dražen Budiša, the leader of the HSLs and a Communist dissident from Tito's period, voters elected Stjepan Mesić, the leader of the HNS, and the last President in the Presidency of the Yugoslav Federation (Grbeša, 2008). Many of the constitutional powers of the President were abolished, such as the appointment and dismissal of the Head of the Government and members of the government, and the convening of government sessions, chairing the sessions and proposing the agenda for those sessions (Zakošek, 2002, pp. 114-115). Mesić also won his second presidential term against HDZ's candidate Jadranka Kosor. In 2010 Ivo Josipović was elected as a candidate of SDP.

The first Croatian independent Constitution was adopted in December 1990, and it was constituted of the House of Representatives, the First Chamber, and the House of Counties, the second chamber (Kasapović, 1993). Croatia's first electoral system was adopted on February 15th, 1990, for all three parliament houses, and it was a majority system modelled on the French electoral system (ibid). In this electoral system, in single member districts, the candidate was elected by an absolute majority. If nobody won an absolute majority in the first round, the second round followed, in which a candidate had to win by plurality, with a seven percent threshold for the candidate's participation in the second round of the election (ibid). Kasapović stresses that the majority system itself was clearly a message to the voters to choose only

between the two major parties “the Reformed Communists (the SDP) or the anti-Communists (the HDZ)” (1993). Furthermore, Henjak et al. find that: “The Croatian party system could be described as based on two multiparty blocs with relatively high potential for intra-bloc volatility (including abstentions) but relatively low inter-bloc volatility” (2013, p. 456). In the following years, the electoral system went through several changes. “In 1992, the absolute majority system was abandoned and a segmented system in which an equal ratio of direct and closed list seats was adopted (Kasapović, 2005, p. 5). In 1995, this system was remodelled into a segmented system with the preponderant share of the closed list seats” (ibid). Only five years later, in 1999, instead of the segmented electoral system, Croatia introduced a proportional system “with proportional voting in ten multi-member electoral constituencies into seats, and a five percent electoral threshold at the constituency level” (Grbeša, 2008). As is obvious from the presented changes in the electoral system in only ten years, Croatia is indeed a unique case to be studied. In 1990, Croatia had a majority electoral system, in 1992 there was a system of plurality and, since 2000, it has an electoral system with proportional representation. In these ten years, three electoral models have been applied for the first chamber of the Parliament: the majority, segmented and proportional electoral model (Henjak et al, 2013).

Following, as we saw in the previous sections Croatia went through many changes in its political system what makes it an interesting case to study personalisation of politics. Šimunjak hypothesises that communist systems may represent “an ideal context for an increase in the personalisation of political communication” (Šimunjak, 2014, p. 65). She examined the personalisation in daily newspapers in Yugoslavia, Croatia and the United Kingdom, focusing on the media portrayal of every head of the executive government who was in power for longer than three years (2017, p. 480). Šimunjak’s sample included newspaper articles from several newspapers published from 1945 until 2015, starting: “in the Yugoslav and Croatian case, with Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito and ending with the former Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, while in the British case, it started with the first post-war Prime Minister Clement Attlee and ended with David Cameron” (ibid). Comparing the average number of articles mentioning the political leader per week and the ratio of leader to party mentions in the newspapers examined, the study came to the most interesting findings. “... the analysis of Croatian newspapers points to the fact that these media have undergone a process of de-personalisation in media reporting during the period of democratic transition” (Šimunjak, 2017, p. 482). Šimunjak further finds a significant difference in reporting about the leaders in the communist papers, where more emphasis is, in general, put on their leader than it is in the

Western countries in the period from 1945 to 1990. “None of the British Prime Ministers was more media visible in *The Times* than was Tito in the Yugoslav quality paper *Vjesnik* ... from 1945 to 1990 Tito was more visible than The League of Communists of Yugoslavia in both communist papers” (ibid). Tito’s high media prominence is explained by the fact that the media in communism were not free, and journalists had to write about leaders what they were instructed to write, and this *modus operandi* supports the idea of “communist cult building”.

Grbeša examined the personalisation in Croatia in the 2000 Presidential elections and she found that Mesić won because of “his attractive personality and relaxed approach, which seemed extraordinarily well-suited to the context of the 2000 Presidential election because voters wanted a President who will be completely different from the authoritarian and pretentious Franjo Tuđman” (Grbeša, 2008, p. 70). In this period, the degree of personalised power decreased (Ilišin, 2001). Mesić was very indifferent towards these changes (ibid). It can be said that he determined how the role of the President would look in the future. Since one of the changes was also that the elected President could not keep his/her party identity card, Mesić behaved as the President of all citizens. As everyone’s President, he enjoyed significant popularity: he travels across the country, keeps in touch with ordinary people, he warns the government about problems and offers solutions (ibid). He also confronts the government when it comes to questions that are related to defence and security issues, in relation to which the President kept some authority, but without the direct political power to impose his decision. His style and way of governing brought him a second term, when he won the election against Jadranka Kosor, who was HDZ’s candidate.

After two terms in office, Mesić left Pantovčak and in 2009, his successor Ivo Josipović came to power, supported by the SDP and other leftist parties in the election campaign. Josipović won the elections over Milan Bandić. Šimunjak (2013) studied privatisation of politics as a part of the communication strategy in these elections. Studying Josipović’s and Bandić’s statements in Croatian newspapers, she found that Josipović rarely used privatisation as a strategy and when he did, it was mostly utilized to answer journalists’ questions (2013, p.45). However, she concludes that communication in the presidential elections of 2009/2010 was privatised because another candidate Milan Bandić employed privatisation traits extensively in order to appear as “one of us”, and because Ivo Josipović used privatisation to attack Milan Bandić. Yet, Josipović lost the run for re-election and ended the established path of his predecessors, Tuđman and Mesić, who won elections twice in a row. Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, HDZ’s candidate, won the

elections in the second round and left Josipović with one mandate. These elections were specific also because: “The Internet was, for the first time, an equal part of the campaign, together with radio, television and print, although candidates used social media in a significantly lesser scope” (Šimunjak et al, 2017, p. 546). In this context, Šimunjak et al. (2017, p. 548) find that Josipović was the most active candidate on social media among nine candidates. They also confirmed the findings from previous studies by Lilleker et al. (2015, from pp. 756-757 in Šimunjak et al, 2017), who finds that Facebook is considered the most important social network for political communication in new Member States of the EU. Therefore, this study examines Ivo Josipović’s use of his Facebook fan page during his entire presidential term from 2010 till 2015.

From 2010 until today the share of households with broadband internet access in Croatia has significantly increased. For instance, in 2010 49% of households had internet access while in 2015 that number increased to 76% (Schmid, 2019, July 10). According to the latest report from Internet World Stats (2019, March), internet penetration in Croatia in 2019 was 90.9%. With more than 90.9% of citizens who have internet access, Croatia is above the European average, which is 86.8%. The latest report from the Reuters Institute shows that 89% of citizens in Croatia get their news online (including news from social media) (Peruško, 2019). Although the sample included only people who read news online at least once a month, under-representing, in this way, the consumption habits of those people who are not online, usually those who are older and less educated, the numbers are still very significant, and they clearly show the trend towards reading news online (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, & Kleis, 2019). The report for Croatia reveals that 56% of respondents use Facebook for news, YouTube is used for news by 28% respondents, and Instagram is used by only by 10% (+4) (Peruško, 2019, pp. 76-77). With these numbers, Croatia is situated among the world’s average proportion of respondents in all of the examined markets that have used each social network for news in the week before the research was conducted (Newman et al, 2019, pp. 56-57). For instance, different age groups use social media differently in order to get news. However, Facebook is the most popular social network for news among all age groups, ranging from 45% to 52% of the examined respondents in all of the markets who use Facebook for news. The next most popular social network in all of the examined markets is YouTube with a proportion of 26 to 32% of respondents who use YouTube for news. Instagram is most rarely used for news consumption (ibid).

These information shows how important it is to study political communication on the internet, as well as citizens' online engagement. Taking into account that in the examined period included in my research, the internet and social media were undergoing tremendous expansion, it is believed that the results provided in the following chapters will give interesting insights into how political communication was changing and adapting to the new media environment.

4 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 The research questions

This chapter tests character and intensity of personalisation of online political communication of leaders in three countries: Barack Obama in the United States, David Cameron in the United Kingdom and Ivo Josipović in Croatia. Personalisation is here conceptualised on two different levels: 1. as part of the political communication strategy of political actors and 2. as an incentive/stimulus for citizens' engagement online. In order to examine the personalisation on Facebook in the US, the UK and Croatia, three main research questions are proposed:

RQ1: What was the character and intensity of personalisation on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović?

RQ2: How were private and popular cues used to communicate on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook fan pages?

RQ3: Which personalisation traits communicated on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook encouraged or discouraged users' engagement?

To answer these questions three different cases were selected, a quantitative research approach was chosen, and, a method content analysis was conducted. The methods of data analysis used were descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

4.2 Quantitative research design and methodology

4.2.1 Selection of cases

In this section, the online communication of a President in a presidential regime (Barack Obama in the United States), a President in a parliamentary regime (Ivo Josipović in Croatia), and a Prime Minister in a parliamentary regime (David Cameron in the United Kingdom) is analysed. Relying on the notion that personalisation, as a recurrent and pervasive trend in contemporary political communication and as a constitutive part of the "Americanisation thesis" has been exercised across developing democracies, similarly to the established democracies (Swanson & Mancini, 1996), I wanted to test the personalisation thesis in one developing democracy

(Croatia), and two established democracies (the US and the UK) (for the context of selected countries see Chapter 3). Any kind of generalisation is beyond the scope of this study because it includes only three cases. After all, generalisation serves to advance contentious theories that cannot explain political experience at the human level (Bennett & Entman, 2001, p. 10). Although these are completely different countries, with different political and communication systems, it is most valuable and unique that we can analyse them on the same platform and under the same conditions and rules of that platform, in similar time-frames (ranging from 2008 to 2016) on Facebook fan pages of three politicians who were incumbents in the examined periods but also running for the second terms in the office. In contrast to other media platforms, such as TV or the print media, which differ in each country, Facebook is the same in every country. Besides, the unmediated nature of Facebook, the web pages of political actors and video ads have the same characteristics in a “controlled” media environment (Rahat & Kenig, 2018), but again, web pages often do not have such a huge potential to attract the public, and video ads are usually limited to election time, which is why they cannot serve for the long term investigation of certain phenomena.

Also, these countries were interesting for studying personalisation because of different political systems which are often seen as key drivers of personalisation. For instance, it has often been argued that in presidential systems there is a greater concentration of attention on the top leaders than in parliamentary systems. On the other hand, it is generally expected that parliamentary systems will be characterised by a lesser degree of general personalisation. Yet, as Kriesi (2011) finds, the ‘Presidentialisation’ thesis predicts that, even in parliamentary systems, there is an increasing focus on the top political leaders. This is especially true in the UK because the concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet is likely to enhance both general personalisation and the focus on top leaders.

4.2.2 Content analysis

Since the empirical study aims to detect the practised patterns of the selected politicians’ communication on their Facebook fan pages and the frequency of the references to certain content, the research is based on a quantitative content analysis method. Content analysis is a method based predominantly on counting and measuring quantities of items while giving, at the same time, considerable thought to “‘kinds’, ‘qualities’ and ‘distinctions’ in the text, before any quantification takes place” (Bauer, 2000, p. 132). In other words, content analysis allows

researchers to detect trends and patterns in text (Deacon et al., 1999). Thus, Facebook posts of three politicians, Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović, will be investigated using content analysis.

The code sheet was derived from previous work by Kaid and Johnston (2001), Grbeša (2010), Wattenberg (1991), Wilke and Reinemann (2001). It contained 24 categories and 108 values, which were divided into four sections. In the introductory section, the technical elements of the posts are examined. In the first, part the code sheet deals with the political content in the posts or more precisely it deals with the image/issue dilemma trying to reveal if the focus of the posts is dominantly on issues or the political and private profile of the political actors. The posts are coded for the presence, and subsequently the dominance, of certain content, including: emphasis on the party's image, its traditional issue positions, values and/or ideology; emphasis on the leader and his/her political or private profile; issue-related content and, finally, emphasis on special demographic, social and/or interest groups (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 18). In this context, it is examined how often political actors invite citizens to act i.e. to what extent they use Facebook to motivate and encourage citizens to engage in politics. Second and third part are set to answer the second research question. The second part is most extensive, and it contains questions regarding private traits in the posts, including family and private life, but also other forms of privatisation, such as humanisation, emotionalization, or striving for celebrity status. In this context what persuasive appeal (source or ethos, logic or logos, and emotion or pathos) each message contains (English, Sweetser & Ancu, 2011) will also be coded. The third section of the code sheet is related to popular culture and questions which try to detect cues related to popular culture (code sheet is extensively discussed in section 4.4).

In the last part of the analysis, I wanted to reveal what kind of content communicated in Facebook posts encourages citizens to like, comment or share the post but also what kind of content decreases the number of interactions. In this context, it is revealed if there is a correlation between the number of citizens' likes and comments, and the private and popular cues that are communicated in Facebook posts. This part of the analysis is conducted by using selected categories obtained from the content analysis and numbers of likes, comments and shares obtained for every examined post using the program language Python (for more details see 4.2.6).

It is important to note that content on Facebook, which is already defined as a “controlled media environment” (Rahat & Kenig, 2018), is managed by communication teams and/or leaders themselves, which means that comments can be removed, that some posts can be better promoted using Facebook ads, and likewise, that Facebook’s algorithm tweaks what is in someone’s newsfeed, and that it also changes what shows on someone’s fan and profile pages (Larsson & Moe, 2012). Despite these notions, the results of content analysis are still indicative of examined politicians’ personalisation strategy, and also the results of numbers of likes, comments and shares are still indicative of Facebook users preferences when it comes to liking, commenting or sharing certain content.

4.3 Final research sample and time span

The unit of analysis is a Facebook post published on the official Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. The final sample of Facebook posts includes all available posts published in the examined time period on selected politicians’ fan pages, amounting to 2804 for Barack Obama, 1317 for David Cameron and 850 for Ivo Josipović (Table 4.1). Posts published on Obama’s Facebook fan page in the period from 2008 to 2016, on David Cameron’s fan page from 2013 to 2016, and on Josipović’s page in the period from 2010 to 2015, are therefore analysed. David Cameron was in the office from 2010, but he opened his Facebook fan page in 2013. All posts that were analysed represent the total number of all publicly available Facebook post for the respective time periods.

Table 4. 1: Number of analysed posts

Political actor	Number of examined posts	Time span	Method
Barack Obama	2804	2008 - 2016	Content analysis
David Cameron	1317	2013 - 2016	Content analysis
Ivo Josipović	850	2010 - 2015	Content analysis

Source: Author’s own calculation.

What is a Facebook post, and how is it defined? Interestingly, it was hard to find an appropriate definition that would serve the needs of this study. Surprisingly, a sufficient definition was not found even in the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics*, which was published in 2014. Although the *Encyclopedia* (Harvey, 2014) is published on more than 1.500 pages, a single definition of a Facebook post or a Facebook status message, terms that are

probably used millions of times every minute across the world, could not be found in it. Anyhow, it can be said that a Facebook post is a message that is published on someone's Facebook fan page, while status messages are the same thing as Facebook posts, with the difference that they are published on private profiles. Yet for the purposes of this research, an extended definition is needed. Looking at the definition of video style provided by Kaid and Johnston (2001, p. 26), many similarities to the definition of a Facebook post can be found. Kaid and Johnston say that "Video style represents the way candidates present themselves to voters through the television medium", encompassing the "techniques, strategies, narratives, and symbols that a candidate decides to use in television advertising. It includes all the elements of television's language (verbal, production, and nonverbal components)" (ibid). If we can just replace the words "video style" and "television" with "social media presentation and social media platform, the definition would still work: A Facebook post represents the way candidates present themselves to voters through social media platform", encompassing the "techniques, strategies, narratives, and symbols that a candidate decides to use on social media. The similarity in the definition comes from the fact that video ads, like social media, fall under the "controlled" media (Rahat & Kenig, 2018).

A post may contain a text, photo and/or video. Integral parts of the posts are also the numbers of likes, comments and shares. Although in many studies only the textual part of the post is analysed, because of the simpler process of scraping the data, it was important for this research to analyse photos as an integral part of the post. The photo, in many cases, says much more than the textual part of the post, especially when the textual part consists of only a few words. Further, sometimes the photo can speak for itself, and may even speak differently from what is written in the textual part of the message. Not to mention that in some cases posts do not even have a textual part and consist of only the photo which is often saying a thousand words. Furthermore, since many formats of communication such inphographics, "picture quotes", memes and others have become very popular, it would be impossible and even wrong not to analyse the text written in these photos, and this is exactly what is still completely neglected in studies that include only textual analyses in their research. Following, photos/images were coded as integral part of examined posts in this study.

Data collection

Collecting the data from internet sources is not always as easy as it may look. The process of data extraction is also popularly called "data scraping" or the "mining of data". Scraping is a

technique for the automated capture of online data (Marres & Weltevrede, 2013, p. 313). Without going into the details about the scraping technique and its pros and cons, I will just direct interested readers to a terrific piece by Marres and Weltevrede (2013), in which they explain everything one would need to know about scraping in the social sciences. However, what is important to underline from their study is the notion that scraping can extract “structured information” from online sources, which is why scraping is so valuable for social scientists.

The program language Python was used to collect the data. A Python script utilising Facebook’s official Graph API to collect posts and comments from Obama’s⁸, Cameron’s and Josipović’s Facebook pages, was created. With Python, you get structured data in Excel files. Once the information extraction from the selected pages is complete, Excel files with the textual part of status messages in one column, the number of likes, comments, shares; the time when it was published, and, very importantly, the code of the original posts, are provided. Figure 4.1 shows how the excel sheets with all these data looked like.

Figure 4. 1: Visual presentation of extracted data in Excel files

id	link	name	created_time	message	likes	comments	shares
6815841748_10155376455326749	https://www.facebook.com/ObamaFoundation	Obama Foundation	2017-11-01T16:5	None	19658	832	4
6815841748_10155375836346749	https://www.facebook.com/GetAmericaCovered	Get America Covered	2017-11-01T13:0	Starting today, you can sign up for 2018 health coverage. Head o	85586	2866	26
6815841748_10155349552881749	https://www.facebook.com/Live:Obamaandthe	Live: Obama and the	2017-10-21T23:5	Tonight, the ex-Presidents are getting together in Texas to supp	260552	32073	43177
6815841748_10155311990586749	https://www.facebook.com/ObamaFoundation	Obama Foundation	2017-10-06T19:1	I feel lucky to spend time with young leaders like these. Keep up t	63595	4289	2
6815841748_10155308929626749	https://www.facebook.com/None	None	2017-10-05T15:3	When I left office, I told you all that the single most important th	119338	4489	7103
6815841748_10155303917731749	https://www.facebook.com/None	None	2017-10-03T19:5	I dropped in on Michelle’s talk at the Pennsylvania Conferenci	436540	38928	95500
6815841748_10155251442326749	https://www.facebook.com/ObamaFoundation	Obama Foundation	2017-09-13T14:0	Michelle and I want the Obama Foundation to inspire and empov	184954	8246	6
6815841748_10155249876536749	https://www.facebook.com/None	None	2017-09-12T22:0	America’s long journey towards equality has been guided by countless small acts of pe	43461		

Source: Author’s own calculation.

It was crucial for me to have these IDs or codes because the next step in my data collection process was to go to the original post, make a screenshot of it and paste it into the Word document. In short, the process went as follows:

- program a script in Python
- extract the data in an Excel table with the posts' ID numbers
- copy each ID number separately, and paste it as an extension into the provided Facebook link
- make a screenshot of every Facebook post and paste it into the Word document (NVivo)

⁸ While Obama’s Facebook fan page has been analysed numerous times, the researchers almost never emphasise that his official Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BarackObama) was managed by the OFA team. For instance, Gerodimos and Jusstinussen, (2015, p. 114) also studied the same fan page, but never mentioned that it is administrated by the OFA team.

4.4 Research design and operationalisation of variables

To answer the proposed research questions, one code sheet was tailored (Appendix 1). Appendix 1 is applied to posts from Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook fan page. Appendix 1 contains 24 categories and 108 values. Code sheet consists of three main parts. The introductory part deals with the technical details of Facebook posts, the first part is set to reveal political and personal content in the posts, while the second and most extensive part is designed to detect private content in the Facebook communication of Obama, Cameron and Josipović. The third part deals with the popular culture cues in the posts.

In the introductory part of code sheets (Appendix 1), I will be looking at the structure and technical details of the posts. Firstly, I examined on whose fan page the post was published and in which year was it published, ranging from 2008 to 2016. The time period selected was chosen because Barack Obama's two Presidential terms stretch for almost nine years, and the intention was to analyse Facebook posts posted during his entire terms and not just during election time, as most other studies have done. David Cameron also fits into this time period, and his posts from 2013-2016 will be coded. The Facebook fan page of the former Croatian President, Ivo Josipović, will also be analysed in the period from 2010 to the beginning of 2015. As already suggested, coding all available posts in the proposed time period is certainly one of the novelties of this research.

Secondly, in this set of questions, it will be examined if the post contains a photo or not. Photos have always been a powerful means of communication and for this research, the notion that visuals have the capacity to easily transmit personalised communication was very important (Parry, 2015). With that in mind, it was essential to analyse both the photos and the textual part of the post. Since most available program languages for scraping social media content are able to scrape only the textual part of the post, while photos are usually left out, analysing photos as an integral part of the post, is another novelty of this study.

Additional questions related to this part of the analysis were proposed. I wanted to examine what was the format of the posted photos. Values added to this category were: Photography, Illustration, Infographic, Picture quote, Meme or giphy, Photo related to the video, Sign in form. The value "Image related to the video" was added after the pilot analysis was conducted because it was revealed that some posts contain videos without the photo, but when we get to the post,

the first frame of the video is seen as a photo, and once you take a screenshot of the post, that first cadre actually looks like a photo. In conducting the pilot analysis, it appeared that on Obama's fan page different kinds of "sign-in forms", which are usually a coloured photo followed by the words "sign-in", "join", "say you support", "comment", etc. are found. Also, it was asked if the post contains the video. Related to the rise of datafication, the visualisation of complex data sets and issues, accompanied by the need of people to get all the complex information in one single graph or table, whether the image contains a table or graph which shows figures and data concerning a specific issue was examined. In this way, I was able to reveal how Facebook communication, including technical elements, was improving during the years, and how communication through different formats was changing. This is especially related to videos, which have only become so popular in 2015 and 2016. The assumption concerning the structure of the post would thus be that the popularity of use of different formats has been rapidly changing over time, favouring photos, and, in 2016, videos. The pilot analysis also revealed that Cameron and Josipović almost never used these different formats, for which reason posts published on their fan pages were not coded in categories format of the photo and graphs.

4.4.1 Personalisation and political content in the posts

To determine how often and in what ways Obama, Cameron and Josipović communicated political content on their Facebook fan pages, six main categories were introduced: Overall focus, Issues, Dominant strategies, Call for action, Type of the post and Visibility of examined politicians in the posts (Appendix 1). The intention was to examine what the content of the examined posts is, what is in the overall focus of the posts, which issues are most often mentioned, what strategies are used and how often citizens are invited to engage in certain actions. The category type of the post was introduced to determine a general type and tone of the post. Finally, in this part, the visibility of Obama, Cameron and Josipović was examined as a general indicator of personalisation.

Overall focus

The first question in this section asks about the Overall focus of the post. The category Overall focus was taken from Grbeša's article about the personalisation of political communication in the Croatian parliamentary elections in 2003 and 2007 (2010). In deciding the specification of the code values in the Overall focus category, Grbeša partly relies on Kaid and Johnston's

(2002, p. 18) differentiation between image and issues. Kaid and Johnston say that: “traditionally, early research defined issue content as dealing with specific policy stands, policies tied to concerns of citizenry, topics and concerns linked to the national interest, statements of candidate positions on policy issues, or preferences on issues or problems of public concern, whereas images have been coded as a concentration on candidate qualities or characteristics” (in Kaid and Johnston, 2002, p. 282). Relying on this main differentiation between image and issues, values added to the Overall focus category are extended and can be divided into two groups; those that relate to political content and those that relate to a personal profile. Yet, it has to be emphasised that it is often hard to make a clear distinction between image and issues, because these two categories are not exclusive, as Kaid and Johnston (2002) found in their research about image related video ads and issue related video ads.

In this context, personal profile (image) has been divided into two main values: political profile and private profile (Grbeša, 2010), wherein the political profile means a focus on the political actor’s political qualities or characteristics which are, according to Wattenberg (1991, pp. 81-82), integrity, reliability, competence and charisma. The private profile concerns a focus on the candidates’ private features or private lives, and refers to a candidate’s appearance, age, family, hobbies, childhood, habits, etc. In this research, it refers to the private and political profiles of Obama, Cameron and Josipović, and if someone else’s profile was in the focus, that was emphasised. The second part of the code sheet is specifically dedicated to investigating the phenomenon of privatisation (see next section 4.5.4).

Values connected with the political content are those that Grbeša (2008) relates to: the Electoral process (procedures related to suffrage, electoral system and the like); Campaigning which is defined as activities related with the canvassing, donor dinners, meetings with supporters, testimonials. Bearing in mind the role of social media in permanent campaigning, it is expected to find this value very often during the different time periods. Also, the value Rebuttal is included in the category Overall focus and it refers mostly to attacks and quarrels between candidates. In relation with the value Rebuttal the value Controversies was added because the results of the pilot analysis of Obama’s Facebook posts discovered that, for instance, controversies regarding the election of the judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court was widely discussed in social media. Another theme that asked for this category was the involvement of Hillary Clinton in the FBI affair. Although Clinton was involved in this affair as a Presidential candidate, everything happened during Obama’s term, and his reaction as a

President and a Democrat was expected in social media. Furthermore, the results of the news coverage of the 2016 General Elections revealed that controversies were in the overall focus of 17% of news articles during 2015 and 2016 (Patterson, 2016, December 1), while Obama was still the President. Because of this, it is important to examine how often he referred to different controversies in his Facebook communication. It will also be interesting to discover how often controversies were the focus on the Facebook fan pages of David Cameron and Ivo Josipović.

Additionally, since my research involves periods during the terms and not only the election period, I added code values that relate to different kinds of Announcements regarding upcoming events, logistics, anniversaries, and other official events and duties that statesmen carry out during their terms. Relying on some previous studies, which find that Facebook is often used as a clipboard (Vučković & Bebić, 2013) and as a tool for top-down promotion (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015) it will be interesting to see in how many cases this was happening in Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's cases.

Issues

The next category examined was which issue was the main focus of the post (Grbeša, 2008). Having in mind the previously mentioned definition of issues provided by Kaid and Johnston (2002), by asking which specific issue was in the main focus of the post, it was possible to reveal the differences between Obama, Cameron and Josipović when it comes to communicating issues. Issues included in the analysis were Environmental issues, Immigration policy, the Economy, Minority rights, Health policy, Religion and Education. The pilot analysis did not reveal any new values. Yet while doing the coding, new values needed to be added, mostly those that were specific to a certain country, Criminal justice system in the US, Brexit in the UK, Constitution in Croatia and a value named Security issues, veterans and wars which appeared to be relevant for all three examined cases. These values will be discussed in more details in the chapter with the results.

Dominant strategy

The next category coded Facebook posts for their dominant communication strategy. The values for different strategies were derived from Kaid and Johnston (2002, p. 294) and Grbeša (2008). They include values such as emphasising accomplishments, attacking an opponent's record, meeting with world leaders, making promises for the future, calling for changes, emphasising the party's values and traditional issue positions (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, 2002).

Other values within this category “victorious enthusiasm”, celebrity endorsement, humour, spoof and irony (Grbeša, 2010) were seen as indicators of different goals of privatisation which will be elaborated in the next section (4.5.4). The pilot analysis also revealed that a category concerning the interaction with ordinary citizens should be added. It appeared that, in Obama's case, his supporters are often used as a dominant strategy in the post. This value involves ordinary citizens when they are the main focus, with their stories or testimonials and/or the political leader inviting them to participate in different activities. Again, although designed for video ads, coding Facebook posts using these values worked well.

Call for action

How often politicians use Facebook fan pages to invite citizens in different actions was examined. These calls for actions included invitations to online engagement through different forms of online petitions, online polls, invitations to share, comment, express opinions. Also, it included calls for offline engagement inviting them to vote, to donate, to join in volunteering, to join meetings, mobilise, etc. These questions were important to reveal whether politicians, in this way, use that one dimension of the democratic potential of social media.

Type of the post

After looking at the dominant strategy of the post, I tried to tailor values that would describe the dominant type of the post. The values informative, motivational and inspirational were offered. For informative, posts that contained information, facts, data and figures were coded. Motivational covered posts that have a direct call to action, online, offline or as an unspecified form of action, while inspirational covered those posts that try to inspire, encourage, tell stories of other people who did great things. Photos were an important element in this category because a photo can leave a stronger impression, it can contain data, graphs, be informative. It can, for instance, picture other people involved in actions and motivate you to engage, and it can also be inspirational, showing nature, or the political leader in solemn thought giving an inspirational quotation.

Visibility of Obama, Cameron, Josipović and other actors in posts

The first indicators of visibility of examined politicians were the values political and private profile in the category Overall focus, which clearly pointed to focus on individuals in the examined posts. Further, looking at the presence or absence of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in the photos posted on examined posts, it was possible to reveal how often they appeared in

these photos. The assumption was that high numbers of posts in which Obama, Cameron and Josipović appeared will reveal a high visibility of leaders which meant that in these cases we could say that their Facebook fan pages were personalised. Value defined as “portrait photo” served as an indicator of strongly expressed personalisation and image building. This value was added in the code sheet because it is well-known how Obama’s portrait photos were a powerful tool of communication, and how his illustrated portrait photos in different colours became a brand. Also, by comparing the appearance of other politicians in the photos with the presence of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in the photos, it was possible to conclude if these leaders used Facebook page primarily to promote themselves or they also promoted other politicians, members of their teams and staff, other important political figures etc. Presence of other politicians was also a possible indicator of focusing on political opponents. Further, after detecting the visibility of examined politicians in their Facebook posts, different goals of privatisation were examined. First was to examine different techniques of humanisation these politicians used to familiarise with Facebook users.

4.4.2 Private in the posts

The definition of personalisation of political communication used in this study says that personalisation refers to the growing visibility of individuals in media coverage and strategic communication. The visibility of individuals refers in turn to political and private personality traits of these individuals. The specific focus of this research was on private lives and the infiltration of private personality traits in Facebook communication of Obama, Cameron and Josipović. Exposure of examined politicians’ private lives was examined in the context of Langer’s definition of privatisation of political personae (2010) and Holtz-Bacha’s (2004) differentiation between different goals of privatisation. Following from this, an extensive number of categories was developed to detect different cues that can be related to the concept of privatisation of political communication. When creating categories I relied on three goals of privatisation tailored by Holtz-Bacha (2004) - humanisation, striving for celebrity status and emotionalization.

Humanisation

Holtz-Bacha (2004, p. 49) defined “humanisation” as a “classic image strategy which makes politicians appear more personable, more like the layperson, and thus seemingly close and familiar to voters”. Relying on this definition, categories in this section were designed to detect

Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's attempts to "familiarise" with voters on Facebook by appearing "human" and to identify techniques used to achieve this particular goal. Different values were used as indicators of humanisation. First was the setting in which Obama, Cameron or Josipović were featured. More specifically, an indicator of humanisation was if they appeared a) familiarly interacting with citizens, as "one of us"; b) or if they appeared "behind the scenes". The value "behind the scenes" was introduced as a result of the pilot analysis, which revealed that this value should be added in order to capture photos that looked as though they are "unintentional", spontaneous, or even "amateurish" (Enli, 2017). These photos were meant to look as though the political actor did not even know that he was being photographed in different situations, while he was preparing for his speech, while he was adjusting his tie, making a phone call etc. This value corresponds with the idea of the rise of authenticity (Enli, 2017) and informalisation (Wouters, 2007) in politics. Presenting politicians in this kind of settings is also a way to get closer to ordinary citizens.

Similarly, by looking at the outfits of examined politicians, it will be revealed how often Obama, Cameron and Josipović appeared in formal and casual outfits or a combination of formal and casual clothes. It is assumed that appearing in casual combinations, not wearing a suit and tie, gives voters a feeling that the politician is closer to them, that he is also just a regular guy, "one of us", informal and authentic. In this context, politicians' facial expressions were examined to reveal whether they more often appeared smiling and relaxed, or serious and strict. This is important, because it will reveal how these politicians wanted to be perceived, as serious political actors or more as a politician who is one of us, who smiles, who is warm and approachable.

It is already mentioned that the appearance of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in interaction with ordinary citizens was used as an indicator of humanisation. Similarly, another two values related to ordinary citizens were seen as humanisation techniques. The first was the presence or absence of ordinary citizens in photos that were an integral part of examined posts. In this context, I tried to make a distinction between ordinary people and different social and interest groups, although these categories are often hard to differentiate. Subsequently, it was checked for the presence or absence of interest groups in posts. The second technique which was seen as humanisation technique was a value added to the category Dominant strategy, named Interaction with ordinary citizens. This value was coded when ordinary citizens were in the main focus of the post, with their stories or testimonials, and/or when Obama, Cameron or

Josipović were directly inviting ordinary citizens to participate in different actions. The pilot analysis revealed that this value needed to be added to the category Dominant strategy because ordinary citizens often appeared to be in the primary focus of examined politicians' Facebook communication strategy. Related to the Dominant strategy, another value was counted as an indicator of humanisation, and that was the use of humour, spoof or irony in the posts.

Another important indicator of humanisation was referencing to the private lives of examined politicians. The references to private lives and the appearance of family members of examined politicians were of great interest in this research.

Private and family lives of Obama, Cameron and Josipović

The first indicator of humanisation which referred to private lives was the value Private profile within the category Overall focus. Coding posts for having Private profile in the Overall focus and not some other of nine values which were offered in this category was a clear indicator of the presence of privatisation in the examined posts. Further, it was asked if Obama's, Cameron's or Josipović's family lives were mentioned in the posts, likewise were there any references to their private lives (hobbies, special talents, private feelings, good looks, favourite music, college days, etc.). Another indicator was the presence of their family members and pets in the photos posted in examined posts. If they were featured in a private setting in the posted photos, in their homes, courtyards, weekend houses or similar, that was also an indicator of privatisation.

Emotionalization in Facebook posts

Emotionalization defined as a strategy aimed at generating sympathy and building emotional ties with voters, is one among four directions in which privatisation can operate, according to Holtz-Bacha (2004, pp. 49-50). In this study, primary indicators of emotionalization were the types of appeals or arguments that were used in the Facebook posts. The categorisation of appeals is taken from Kaid and Johnston (2001, 2002) who differentiate between emotional, logical and ethical appeals. Authors explain that "emotional appeals use language and imagery in order to evoke certain feelings, whereas logical appeals use the language of evidence and facts to prove a point", while ethical or source credibility appeals try to convince the voter of a candidate's trustworthiness and credibility (2002, p. 288). Although the authors originally tailored this classification for video ads, the pilot analysis confirmed that the same classification can equally well be applied to Facebook posts. For instance, logical appeals containing any sort

of data and facts can also be expressed in the format of graphs, infographics, giphy(ies), which are all formats used in Facebook posts. When it comes to ethical appeals, since the analysis includes fan pages which officially carry the names of the selected political actors, it is assumed that everything that is said on these fan pages comes from them, which is why only the posts that involved someone else (other than Obama, Cameron, Josipovic) as a source of credibility were coded for the presence of ethical appeals. The analysis included the presence of logical and ethical appeals in the posts, in order to enable us a better interpretation of the presence or absence of emotional appeals.

Simplification as a third goal of privatisation will not be discussed in this research because it is assumed that a Facebook post, by its' basic definition, is a simplification of a certain issue. Last form in which privatisation can appear in Holtz-Bacha's words is striving for celebrity status. This strategy is discussed in more details in the next section.

4.4.3 Popularisation of politics and celebrity endorsement in the posts

The definition of popularisation of politics refers in the first place to an attempt to engage large sections of a population with politics by engaging many different processes and outcomes (Street, 2016). Typically, in Street's words politics can become "popular" "by using the styles and platforms associated with popular culture" (2016, p.1). One of these styles and platforms associated with popular culture is already mentioned: "striving for celebrity status". "Heading for a celebrity status refers to the notion that politicians want and have the potential to acquire celebrity status normally reserved for show business stars which consequently may make them more attractive to broader audiences" (Grbeša, 2008, p. 36). It was discussed in the theoretical chapter (section 2.2.3) that two key resources of celebrity politics are attention to politicians' private lives and popular culture (Van Zoonen, 2006, p. 298). While the indicators of attention on private lives were previously revealed, the indicators which revealed if Obama, Cameron or Josipović acquired celebrity status were developed based on Street's recognition of different techniques used by "celebrity politicians". The first indicator was a value "celebrity endorsement" which was one among 13 values in the Dominant strategy category. This value corresponds with the technique in which politicians associate themselves with show business stars through joint appearances, endorsement and such (Street, 2004, p. 437). Additionally, it was observed whether Obama, Cameron or Josipović were featured in the company of celebrities or if celebrities appeared alone in the posted photos. Also, one of the most obvious

indicators of popularisation were references to popular culture in the posts. All the posts that mentioned celebrities, music, movies, TV shows, talk shows, concerts, popular sports stars and any other popular culture traits in its broadest definition were coded for the presence of references to popular culture. Lastly, the category presence of celebrities in photos in examined posts revealed if any famous persons were used as techniques to get closer to citizens. Please see Appendix 2 for a brief overview of concepts and categories applied in this section.

4.4.4 Likes, comments and shares – measuring citizens' interactivity

The third research question tries to answer which personalisation traits communicated on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook encouraged or discouraged users' engagement? In order to try to answer this question, it was necessary to scrape the numbers of likes, comments and shares for each Facebook post that was analysed by using content analysis. Including these numbers of interactions and results of content analysis in different regression models, it was possible to detect which content communicated in the examined posts attracted more likes, comments or shares. Also, it was revealed which categories or indicators worked to discourage citizens' interaction on a particular post. Regression models used to answer the third research question are discussed in the section 4.6.2.

4.5 Pilot analysis and the reliability analysis of the quantitative data

A pilot analysis was conducted on a set of 350 randomly chosen posts. 200 posts from Obama's page were selected, 100 posts from Cameron's page, and 50 posts from Josipović's fan page. The pilot analysis pointed to certain content that should be included in the categorial apparatus. For instance, it revealed that new values should be added to the categories' issues, dominant strategy, etc.

Furthermore, to test the validity in terms of accuracy in coding, an intercoder reliability test was conducted, as well as an intracoder reliability test. Reliability or 'reproducibility' refers to the idea that different people should be able to code the text in the same way, using the same coding book (Weber, 1990, p. 17). However, in this specific case, an intracoder reliability test, which refers to the degree of agreement among the repeated coding performed by a single coder, was also necessary for some variables, because I coded most of the sample myself. The intercoder reliability test was conducted by using the Holsti method for agreement (1969) on 350 randomly

chosen posts. Two independent coders coded the posts. The results showed the average reliability score of 0.86 with a variance in reliability across categories ranging from 0.69 to 1.00 (see Appendix 3 for results that cover all variables). The intracoder test was conducted on categories which had scores lower than 0.75 in the intercoder test. Four categories had lower scores: the presence of emotional appeals in the post; the presence of logical appeals in the post; the setting in which the leader appeared in the photo; the dominant strategy. The scores of the repeated test for these categories ranged from 0.72 to 0.85.

4.6 Methods of data analysis

In order to analyse coded data, the data were transferred from the Excel spreadsheet, in which they were originally gathered, into the SPSS 20 statistical software, and were explored using descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.6.1 Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics

Descriptive statistics was used to answer the first two research questions. It was used because it enables us to quantitatively describe and summarise the data (Petz, Ivanec & Kolesarić, 2012). It starts by presenting the frequencies of all variables included in the content analysis. By simply counting the frequencies of presence or absence of traits communicated in the posts, I was able to answer what the character and intensity of personalisation on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović was and how private and popular cues were used in their Facebook communication.

Descriptive statistics was also used to quantitatively describe and summarise the data obtained from content analysis. Graphical displays were created in Excel. Inferential statistics i.e. regression analysis is used to estimate the strength of the selected variables, which measured key concepts in this study, in explaining the numbers of likes, comments and shares.

4.6.2 Regression analysis

To answer the third research question “Which traits communicated in Facebook posts of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović may work to encourage or discourage Facebook users’ engagement expressed in numbers of likes, comments and shares?”, the method of linear

regression with ordinary least squares (OLS regression) was employed. OLS regression was chosen as the method of analysis because it enables estimation of the simultaneous predictive impact of multiple independent variables on a continuous dependent variable (Petz et al, 2012). In this analysis the dependent variable is continuous and measured on a ratio scale. Multiple linear regression models estimate the relationship between multiple independent variables and a scalar (continuous) dependent variable. Linear regression has the purpose of modelling to what extent the variation in values of the dependent variable can be explained by the variation in the independent variables. It offers a quantitative estimation of a possible linear relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable and the strength of this relationship. The modelling of a linear relationship follows the ordinary least squares (OLS) approach which estimates the best fitting line and minimises the differences between the predicted linear function and the observed values.

In the context of this specific study, regression analysis was used to identify significant relationships between cues communicated in Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's posts, and the numbers of citizens' likes, comments and shares. As already mentioned, this part of the analysis was conducted using selected categories obtained from the content analysis and numbers of likes, comments and shares obtained for every examined post by using the program language Python for scraping the posts and associated numbers of posts, comments and likes. The analysis was explanatory. The numbers of likes, comments and shares served as separate dependent variables, reflecting different types of interaction on Facebook. The raw data of these variables were standardised (z-scores) which means that their values indicated the number of standard deviations by which the numbers of likes, comments or share for individual posts were found to deviate above or below the mean.

Categories from the content analysis were used as independent variables. The list of independent variables in the analysis included different indicators of political, personalised, private and popular traits that were communicated in Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's posts. These variables were selected from the code sheet based on their theoretical relevance for this research and depending on how empirically relevant they appeared for revealing political, personal, private and popular traits communicated in the posts. More specifically, the variable selection process in the regression models was as follows. To construct the regression models, all independent variables were first simultaneously entered into the equation for linear regression models. All independent variables which yielded statistically significant results were

retained in the model as they demonstrated empirical relevance. Next, for each political leader, several independent variables were eliminated from the regression models. I first assessed the predictive value of individual independent variables which belonged to the groups of theoretically less important variables (political content, technical content). The predictive contribution of those (and other) independent variables in explaining the interactions on Facebook was assessed by looking at the statistical significance (p-value) of their respective regression coefficient (B), and through the variables' individual contribution to the size of the coefficient of determination (R^2) which indicates the percentage of the variance in the dependent variable that is predicted by the independent variables included in the model. Independent variables were excluded from the regression models altogether whenever they did not yield statistically significant results (p-value) and at the same time did not contribute to explaining the total variation of the dependent variable (R^2), did not impact the size of other variables' effects considerably and did not heavily distort the statistical significance and direction (+/-) of other variables. This procedure was repeated, and the same exclusion criteria were applied in the group of variables of central theoretical relevance (personalisation, privatisation, emotionalization, popular culture) for the research aim. As a consequence, the lists of independent variables which were included in the final regression models were not identical for all three political leaders. Also, some variables (i.e. Brexit) were case-specific and could therefore not be included in the regression models for all three leaders. The definitions and descriptions of all variables that were included in the regression analysis, as well as the expected direction of effects of each independent variable on the dependent variables are provided in Table 4.2. The final regression models and results are reported in Table 5.1 (Obama), Table 5.2 (Cameron) and Table 5.3 (Josipović).

Three separate OLS regression models were devised for each political leader, one for each type of interaction (likes, comments, shares). Each model assessed the predictive power of the proposed independent variables to explain the variance in one of the three continuous dependent variables. The regression models which were constructed for Obama's case included the following independent variables: values related with the political content in the posts; four values from the category issues – Economy, Environment, Minority and women rights, Health; then one value from the category overall focus – Campaigning, and Call for action. The expectation is that most of these variables will have either a negative or no effect on numbers of likes, comments and shares, because it proves much harder to engage citizens in political content.

Table 4. 2: Definitions and descriptions of research variables

Concept	Variable name	Definition	Type of variable (scale)	Range of values	Expected effect on Facebook interactions
Independent variable					
Political content	Economy issue	The presence of economic issues in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Environment issue	The presence of environmental issues in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Minorities rights issue	The presence of minority rights issues in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	No effect
	Health issue	The presence of health issues in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	No effect
	Brexit	The presence of a Brexit issue in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Security issues	The presence of security issues in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Issues in overall focus	The presence of issues in the overall focus of a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Campaigning in overall focus	The presence of campaigning in the overall focus of a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
	Controversies in overall focus	The presence of controversies in the overall focus of a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Call for action	The presence of a call for action in a Facebook post.	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
Personalisation/ Visibility	Political profile	The presence of the leader’s political profile in the overall focus of a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
	Presence of other politicians in photos	Presence of other politicians in photos of a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Leader in the photo	Presence of a leader in the photo of a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
	Interest groups in photos	Presence of interest groups in the photo of a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
	Private profile	Presence of the leader’s private profile in the	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)

Privatisation/ Humanisation		overall focus of a Facebook post			
	Family members in photos	Presence of leaders' family members in photos in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
	Ordinary citizens in photos	Presence of ordinary citizens in photos in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
Emotionalisation	Emotional appeals	Presence of emotional appeals in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
Popularisation and celebrity endorsement	Popular culture + celebrities	A composite variable which combines two indicator variables and tests the presence of both references to popular culture and the presence of celebrities in photos of a Facebook post.	Ordinal composite variable	2 – both popular culture and celebrities present 1 – either popular culture or celebrities present 0 – absence of both popular culture and celebrities	Positive (+)
	Popular culture	Presence of references to popular culture in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
	Celebrities in photos	Presence of celebrities in photos in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
Technical elements	Photos	Presence of photos in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Positive (+)
	Graphs	Presence of graphs in photos in a Facebook post	Nominal	1 – presence, 0 – absence	Negative (-)
Dependent variables					
Citizens' interactivity	Shares	The number of times a Facebook post was shared.	Interval	Continuous. Standardised values (Z-scores).	
	Comments	The number of times a Facebook post was commented on.	Interval	Continuous. Standardized values (Z-scores).	
	Likes	The number of likes a Facebook post received.	Interval	Continuous. Standardized values (Z-scores).	

Number of observations: N (Obama) = 2804; N (Cameron) = 1317; N (Josipović) = 850.

Yet, it is expected that for instance campaigning and calls for action will stimulate more interactions than posts which do not contain references to campaign activities and calls for actions. It follows from the assumption that citizens will be more willing to engage online if

they have a platform to do so and if they are invited to participate in specific actions (please see the last column in the Table 4.2 for the predicted effects of each variable). Further, indicators of personalisation included in the analysis were: Political profile in overall focus, presence of Obama in the photo and Other politicians in the photo. The predicted effect in regard to Obama's political profile and his presence in photos is positive. On the other hand, it is expected that the presence of other politicians in photos will lead to less interactions, because the presence of other politicians indicates that the content of the post is less personalised since the focus does not lie only on the leader but on other politicians as well. The indicators of privatisation/humanisation were Private profile in overall focus, Family members in the photos and Ordinary citizens in photos, while an indicator of emotionalization was the presence of Emotional appeals. The variables Private and Political profile, Family members in photos and Other politicians in photos appeared rarely in the examined posts but were still included in the model because these were important indicators of personalisation and privatisation of online communication in the regression models. Moreover, it is expected that these variables will have a strongly positive effect on the numbers of likes, comments and shares. Obama's presence in photos, Emotional appeals and Ordinary citizens in the photos appeared frequently in posts, each variable being present in more than 30% of all examined posts. Furthermore, it is expected that these variables will have a positive effect on Facebook users' interactions. Lastly, indicators of popular traits in the posts were included in this regression model based on their importance for explaining the concept of the role of popular culture in political communication and because the expectation is that they will have a significantly positive effect on the number of likes, comments and shares. The two main indicators of the infiltration of popular culture in this research were the presence of Celebrities in posts and references to Popular culture. Since these two categories appeared to be present in less than 3% of all examined posts, they were combined in one variable "popular culture and celebrities". The variables "presence of graphs in photos" and "interest groups in photos" were included in statistical models to test whether the communication of issues through graphs and through the voice of different interest groups have a negative effects on the number of interactions.

Separate regression models were used to explore the predictors of the number of interactions in the case of David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. Independent variables in Cameron's regression models included five values related to the political content issues – Economy, Security and Brexit, Campaigning in overall focus and Call for action; five categories related to personalisation and privatisation – references to Private life, presence of Family members in

photos, presence of Emotional appeals in the posts, presence of Ordinary citizens in posts and presence of Other politicians in photos. Lastly, two indicators of popularisation - presence of Popular culture cues in the posts and presence of Celebrities in photos were included. In Cameron's case, these two variables were not combined because each appeared in more posts than in Obama's case. In Josipović's models, two variables indicating political in the posts were included: Issues in the overall focus and Call for action; for personal and private content the variables Private life, presence of Emotional appeals, presence of Family members in photos, Ordinary people in photos and presence of Other politicians in photos. Thirdly, references to Popular culture and presence of Celebrities in photos were included in regression models to reveal how citizens' responses to these cues were reflected in the number of likes, comments and shares. Similarly, as in Obama's case, it is predicted that political content in the posts will have a negative effects on the number of likes, comments and shares, whilst personalised posts and posts which contain private and popular traits will have a significantly positive effect on the number of interactions (see last column in Table 4.2 for predicted effect of each variable on the number of likes, comments and shares).

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of this section (5.1) is dedicated to answering the first research question, i.e. What was the character and intensity of personalisation on the Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović?

The second part (5.2) provides the answer to the second research question: How were private and popular cues used to communicate on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook fan pages? By looking at the results of content analysis of Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook posts, I tried to reveal which indicators of the private and the popular that were communicated in Facebook posts of three examined politicians, were most often used and in what ways.

The third part (5.3) offers the results of regression analysis models and tries to answer the third research question: Which personalisation traits communicated on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook pages encouraged or discouraged users' engagement?

Before moving to the main parts of the research, the analysis starts with a brief presentation of the structure and technical details of examined posts with the main focus on the presence of photos in the posts of examined politicians.

The structure and technical elements of examined posts

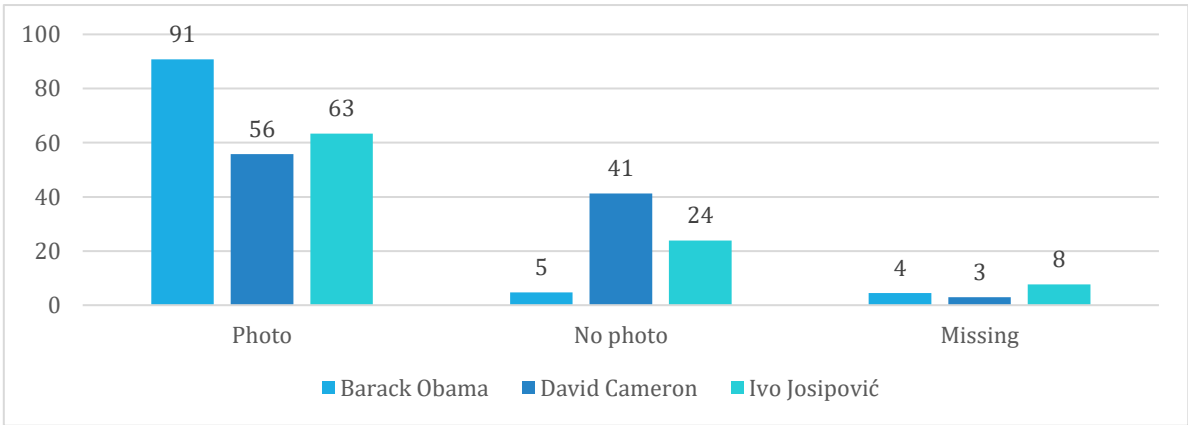
The results of this part of the analysis showed a significant difference in the use of photos in the posts of examined politicians (Figure 5.1). While Obama extensively communicated with photos, which were an essential part of more than 90% of the posts, David Cameron did not have photos in more than 40% of all of the posts published on his fan page from 2013 to 2016. More than 20% posts of Josipović's Facebook fan page that were examined did not contain a photo.

Why is the difference in this basic code of communication on Facebook so significantly present in the selected cases? This can probably be explained by the lack of competence in managing a Facebook fan page and, to some extent, by the different communication strategies used. Cameron's posts very often leave the impression that they are written for Twitter; they are short, mostly issue-focused and, in many cases without photos, which is not typical for Facebook but

is a characteristic of Twitter. He also had many long posts. Sometimes, the whole text of his speeches was posted on his Facebook wall. For instance, on November 26th, 2015, he posted his Commons statement, which was more than 3,000 words long. Although it was that long and completely unadjusted for Facebook, the post gained many interactions, probably because it was about ISIL and the actions they were taking in the country, but also abroad, mostly in Syria, to stop terrorists and secure the country and the western way of life. When he had photos in his posts, they were mainly amateur, often low quality, without filter options or retouching. That may be part of the explanation, but part of the explanation is probably in the chosen strategy. The strategy might be to stress the importance of issues, thus depriving his communication of “unnecessary” photos.

In this context, for instance, Enli (2016; 2017) differentiate between two basic social media strategies in political campaigns: professionalisation and amateurism, where professional social media strategies are characterised by technical expertise, focus groups research and specialisation of staff, which results in the standardisation of messages for the purpose of the efficient promotion of candidates and research-based advanced methods for mobilising voters (in Enli, 2017, p. 55). Enli (2017) defines amateurism, or de-professionalisation, as a social media strategy in which the “focus group tested tweeting seems to be replaced by a more gut-feeling tweeting.” Although Cameron’s communication on Facebook looks de-professionalised, it is more correct to describe it as unprofessional, because it has similar characteristics to online communication in the period before 2012.

Figure 5. 1: Photos in Obama’s, Cameron’s and Josipović’s Facebook posts (%)



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’, ‘David Cameron’ and ‘Ivo Josipović’.

On the other hand, communication on Obama's fan page looked highly professional. Following, in Obama's case⁹ images were further coded as photography, meme, picture quote, giphy, etc. When looking at different formats used in Facebook posts, it is shown that photos were most often used, in nearly 50% of all examined posts. Images which were the first frame of the video were noticed in nearly 13% of all posts. Illustrations and infographics, which were present in around 13%, were relatively new formats at the time when Obama started communicating by using them. Another format called "picture quotes" was present in 11% of all examined posts, while Sign-in forms were used in 5% of all posts. Memes and giphys were rarely used, in around 1% of all examined posts, which indicated that humour was not very often present in Obama's Facebook posts. In this context, it was also asked how often graphs and tables in posts were used to provide certain information and important data. The analysis revealed that these were rarely used (in 4.10% of all examined posts). The results tell us that Obama used different popular formats to communicate his messages to some extent, but that he also most often used photos in his posts.

Revealing how many of examined posts contained photos is important for further analysis which aims to reveal presence of different actors in these photos and also other indicators of personalisation, privatisation and popularisation.

5.1 Personalisation in Facebook posts of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović

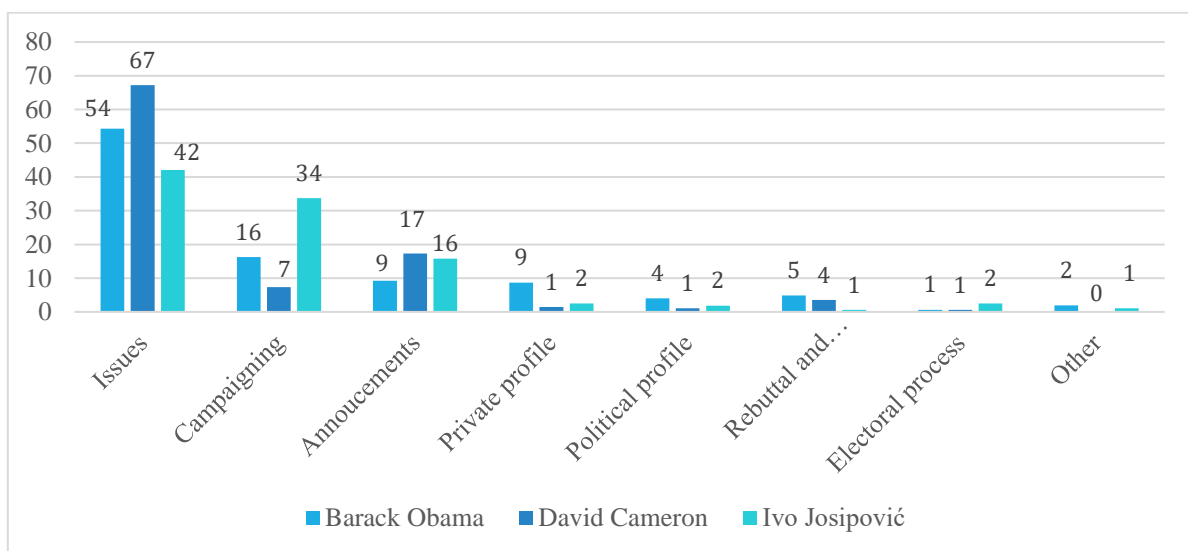
The results presented in this part of the analysis are set to answer the first research question. It starts with the results of the overall focus and issues which were communicated on Facebook fan pages of the examined politicians. It is further revealed what were the dominant strategies in Facebook communication of the respective leaders, how often they used calls for action and what the dominant type of posts on their fan pages was. Lastly, this section ends by answering how often Obama, Cameron and Josipović appeared in their Facebook posts ('visibility'). The visibility of politicians served as a general indicator of personalisation.

⁹ The pilot analysis revealed that in the cases of Cameron and Josipović values related with categories format of the image and graphs almost never appeared, for which reason only Obama's posts were coded in these two categories.

Overall focus

Firstly, I was interested to find out how often indicators of political and personal content in the posts appeared. These indicators are explained in section 4.4.1. Firstly, the case of Obama will be discussed, followed by Cameron and lastly Josipović. From the results demonstrated in Figure 5.2, we can say that the politicians included in this research used their official Facebook fan pages primarily for communicating issues. Barack Obama had issues in the overall focus of 54.28% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.2). The category issues will be discussed in more details in the next section which is dedicated to the presence of different issues in examined posts of three politicians.

Figure 5. 2: Overall focus in Obama’s, Cameron’s and Josipović’s Facebook posts (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

The second and third most coded categories in Obama’s case were campaigning and announcements. A significant number of posts were coded in the category “campaigning”. Campaigning, here, is not related only to elections, but the category includes everything else that does not contain one theme, or has one clear message, but mostly invites supporters to join a certain action. Looking at the results, the 16,22% of posts on Obama’s page that were coded for having campaigning as the overall focus were mostly related to OFA actions (Obama For Action). These posts could not be coded in any other category, because they mostly contained only a call to join the OFA’s supporters. It is interesting to note that campaigning activities of Obama supporters continued even during the second term, when many posts inviting supporters

to “chip in” with donations and actions were posted. This finding supports the idea that social media serve as a great platform for permanent campaigning.

Additionally, since my research involves periods during the presidency and not only during the election periods, I added code values that relate to different kinds of announcements regarding upcoming events, logistics, anniversaries, and other official events, including the daily duties that statesmen carry out during their terms. The everyday activities of political actors were often coded as announcements (Figure 5.2). Relying on some previous studies, which find that Facebook is often used as a clipboard (Vučković & Bebić, 2013) and as a tool of top-down promotion (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015), it is interesting to see that 9.27% of 2,804 Obama’s posts was coded in this category. Posts in this category were related to three main categories: firstly, different anniversaries, like Book Lover’s Day, Apple day, Left-handed day (see first example in Figure 5.3).

Figure 5. 3: “Calendar” of activities and “daily” activities at the White House



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

Obama was eager in presenting daily activities both in and out of the office. The specific style of the posts that was used in one period is also noticed, and might be described as what is called *didascalies* in theatre plays, where the narrator explains what is happening in the photo and who is who in it, a form of subtitling (see second example in Figure 5.3). A specific way of “bringing politics to the people” was also showing different parts of the White House. Obama certainly tried to present the “other side” of the White House, a house where a family lives, a place where they have a garden, where the dog plays in the courtyard, where they have a barbecue, and interact with ordinary citizens. The Kennedy family was among the first families in the White House who opened the house to the media and the people. Reagan later did the same, and now the Obamas were continuously discovering parts of the White House which, with the years of their presence on social media, certainly became familiar to many people.

These findings are in line with what Michelle Obama said about the White House, which she calls “People’s House”: “This is really what the White House is all about. It’s the “People’s House.” It’s a place that is steeped in history, but it’s also a place where everyone should feel welcome. And that’s why my husband and I have made it our mission to open up the house to as many people as we can” (The White House Archive). Ironically, in 2013 the Obama administration closed all White House tours due to budget cuts (Parker, 2013, March 5). The tours were reopened seven months later. In one series of photos, Obama’s social media team presented the inside of Air Force One, and how the President spends his time in the airplane. Thirdly, in this category I coded posts that contained information about a certain activity, and that were usually describing the situation at that exact moment, i.e., in the photo.

While it might have been assumed that Facebook would very often be used for self-promotion and campaigning, we can see that in all three examined cases the politicians communicated about political issues most of the time, while only a smaller portion of their posts had a political or private profile in the overall focus. As already explained in the previous section, political and private profiles refer to the political and private profile of the examined political actor, but also of any other person whose profile was in the overall focus. However, the analysis revealed that there were only a few cases that someone else’s political or private profile was in focus. In the category ‘political profile’, for instance in Obama’s case Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela were mentioned a few times, together with all the qualities they had as great visionaries and fighters. Joe Biden, as Obama’s vice-President, was also mentioned in the category political and private profile, on his birthdays, for instance. However, almost all of the

posts in these two categories were about Obama's political and private profile, with twice as many posts focused on Obama's private profile (8%). The political profile was the overall focus of 4% of the posts published on Obama's fan page (Figure 5.2). Most of them were about his political qualities.

Other categories, like rebuttal and controversies, were introduced because it was expected that the official fan pages would also be used to communicate some controversial issues that are sometimes under-represented in the traditional media. Rebuttal is also a category that relates to attacks on, and disagreements with, other political actors, in this case. Yet, the results revealed that in all examined cases these categories were rarely used. However, one case popped up as interesting in this category on the fan page of Barack Obama. Almost all of the posts which were coded for having controversies in their overall focus (114) were related to the case of Judge Merrick Garland. The case was topical in the last year of Obama's second term in 2016 when Justice Antonin Scalia died. At that time, Obama nominated Judge Merrick Garland to replace Justice Scalia in the Supreme Court. However, the Senate Republicans refused to consider Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court, because they thought that the decision of naming a new Supreme Court justice should be left to the next President – Donald Trump, because Obama's term was at an end, (Schallhorn, 2018, September 5). This example demonstrates very well how Obama used Facebook strategically, and how he used Facebook to insist on certain questions, repeating them hundreds of times, day after day. From this case, we can also see how Facebook was used to mobilise supporters. Obama's administration used this method quite often, trying to create public pressure on different questions by calling supporters to sign online petitions and different forms of support, like adding names in "sign-in forms". It is also significant to note here the role of social media in keeping a particular story alive for a long time. While in traditional media, any story stays alive for a short time, on social media you can repeat the same story an endless number of times. This does not mean that you will keep the interest of the public during that whole time, but you certainly have an opportunity to set the agenda and remind citizens about issues you find important. However, this example also shows that social media platforms are not an almighty weapon, because in the end, Judge Garland was not elected, despite pressure from Obama's administration, and despite support coming from social media.

Next examined value in the category overall focus was the electoral system. In the case of Barack Obama, my expectations were wrong, thinking that Facebook would serve, to some

point, to present and explain, in a simple way, the complex US electoral system, but that was not the case either. As we can see, only 0.64% of posts were related to this topic. These posts were mostly explaining the options available for early voting, while some other topics, like the electoral system, were not in focus. This result comes as a surprise, considering how complex the US electoral system is. Bearing in mind that Obama's targeted group in the elections were young voters and that these young people were Facebook's most prominent users in the examined years, I would expect to see more of an educational campaign specifically related to explaining the electoral system. Yet it can be assumed that younger voters were targeted specifically on some other social media platforms or pages and accounts. We must bear in mind that Obama had more than a hundred social media profiles and accounts.

In Cameron's case, the numbers also show that he communicated about the issues most of the time, in 67.2% of all the examined posts (Figure 5.2). Likewise, in Obama's case, second two most represented categories were campaigning and announcements. Cameron used Facebook for campaigning in 7% of all of the examined posts. Campaigning was, in most cases, related to local elections and activities, such as participating at a call centre to support Conservative candidates. More often, he used different sorts of announcements to communicate on Facebook. These announcements were very often expressions of condolence for officials and famous people who had passed away, and also expressions of support to everyone who suffered in terrorist attacks. In Cameron's case, announcements were also often used to provide information about floods, which were severe during 2015, according to Cameron's Facebook.

Cameron had a political profile as the overall focus, either his or someone else's in only 1% of all examined posts. When Cameron's posts were focused on a political profile, it was usually an explicit call to vote for him and the Conservatives, because he is the person that you should trust. When it comes to private life, we can see that Cameron used elements from his private life very modestly in only 1.45% (Figure 5.2). Last examined value was electoral process in which I also coded those posts that are related to the referendum questions concerning the Scottish referendum for independence and Brexit. However, although I expected more posts dealing with, for instance, explaining the referendum rules and similarly, the number of posts in this category was very low at 0.58%.

The former Croatian President, Ivo Josipović, had issues as the overall focus in 42% of all of the examined posts on his fan page (Figure 5.2), which is still high, but is a significantly lower

number if compared to Barack Obama and David Cameron. However, the result is not surprising, because of the different political systems in examined cases. In the Croatian political system, the President has much less power than the Prime Minister. His role is, in many cases, ceremonial, with real powers only in foreign affairs and security policy. The former Croatian President used Facebook most often for communicating campaign activities, while announcements were usually related to congratulations for sports teams, different celebrations, but also to information about the different activities Josipović was involved in as President. Posts coded in the category 'campaigning' usually contained information about his daily activities, where and when he would be, followed by a kind of report on these meetings and rallies. He also used Facebook to invite citizens to campaign activities.

The values political profile and private profile in Overall focus as indicators of personalisation were rarely present in Josipović's case as well. His private profile was in the overall focus of 2,45% and his political profile was in overall focus in 1,84% out of 814 examined posts (Figure 5.2).

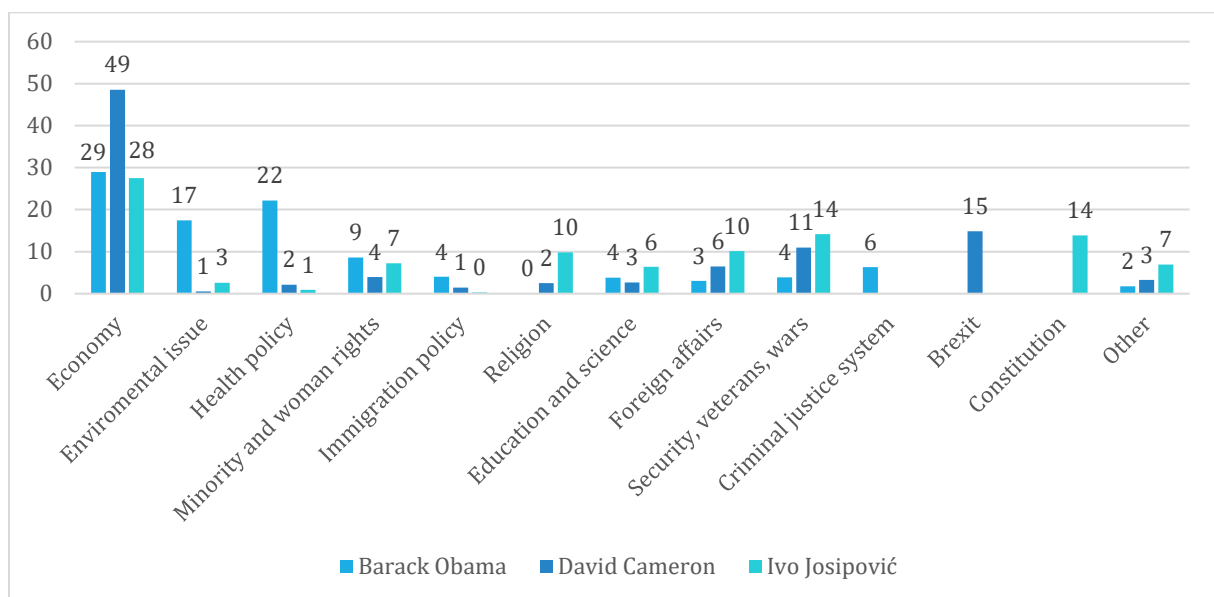
Lastly, the electoral process was in the overall focus of 2.45% of all of the examined posts from Ivo Josipović's fan page (Figure 5.2). An explanation for that is related to one of the main campaign topics that the former Croatian President was communicating, a change of constitution and electoral system. Sometimes, these posts were coded under the issues category, but if they were related to specific elections, accompanied with examples from ongoing elections then the posts were coded for having an electoral process in the overall focus, while posts related to the changes in the constitution and the electoral system, were generally coded for issues and, later, for having the Constitution as the main issue in focus. Obviously, it can be said that the electoral process was not among the important themes communicated through the Facebook fan pages of the selected cases. Lastly, it is evident that topics related to the electoral process were marginal in our analysis. This category was included in the research because it was assumed that political actors would use Facebook for educating and informing citizens about the important questions that are related to the electoral process, such as procedures that are related to suffrage, the electoral system, the distribution of seats, etc.

To sum up, recalling Kaid and Johnston's (2002) image and issue differentiation, it can be said that in Obama's, and Cameron's and Josipović's case specifically, image, here understood as focus on the individual and as indicators of personalisation, was not highlighted.

Issues

In the next question, I asked which issue is the main focus of the post (Grbeša, 2010). The category is derived from Kaid and Johnston's differentiation between image and issues. Issues content deals with specific policy areas. In this research, different policies that are linked to national interests, and policies tied to citizens' interests, were included. The pilot analysis confirmed the values created from those in existing studies. These are Environmental issues, Immigration policy, the Economy, Minority rights, Health policy, Religion and Education (Figure 5.4). The pilot analysis did not reveal new values. Yet during the coding some new values needed to be added: in relation to Obama, the categories Veterans, the Criminal justice system and Foreign affairs were added; in the case of Josipović, a category related to the Constitution was introduced, and specific for Cameron's case was the issue of Brexit (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5. 4: Issues in the main focus (%)



Source: Author's own calculation.

As we can see from Figure 5.4, the Economy was the most mentioned issue on the Facebook wall of Barack Obama. In 28.99% of all posts which had issues in the overall focus different economic issues were promoted and discussed. Three topics dominated in these posts, the economic crisis and recovery from the crisis, and, in line with the economic crisis, the car industry was often mentioned, primarily in the context of government financial support, and then in the context of good results and the recovery of this giant and important part of American industry. Thirdly, they tried to stress the importance of the middle class, which was, again, one

of Obama's promises and one of the issues on which he built his campaign for the first election in 2008. Keeping in mind that Obama overtook the country at the moment of the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression, it is expected to see that a large number of posts would be dedicated to this topic. As expected, health policy was the second most mentioned issue on Obama's official fan page, with 22.16% of 1522 posts which had issues in overall focus. It can be said that Obama and his Administration tried very hard to convince Americans that Obamacare was something good and that they should take some of the offered packages of healthcare. Different strategies were used in trying to accomplish this mission that had so many different interpretations among the public. Many posts were educational and informational, but most often testimonials from the ordinary citizens were used, who were talking about their experiences with Obamacare, bringing their personal stories on health problems and explaining how Obamacare helped them to get adequate medical care. Yet looking at the citizens' engagement related to the posts dedicated to Obamacare, it is visible that over the years the support for Obamacare was declining.

Environmental issues also played an important role in Obama's terms, which is visible from Figure 5.4, showing that issues related to the environment were, in the main focus of 17.39% of 1522 posts which had issues in overall focus. During the presidency, he kept rising awareness of numerous environmental issues using different strategies. The tactic was often also to relate environmental issues to the economy, trying to present the use of renewable energy sources as something that could be paid for and that would be good for the economy of the entire country. Results shown in Figure 5.4 further show that Obama communicated a lot about minorities and women's rights. In the fight for minority rights, marriage equality was in focus. The campaign was emotional, repeating the message that everybody should have the same chance to be happy, because "Love is love" no matter the gender. Besides these messages "of love" and the promotion of the gay flag that was a motif in most of these posts, no other messages were communicated. It could be said that the promotion of gay rights was very conservative, boring, and lacked creativity. Keeping in mind that large areas of the US are conservative, and that gay marriage may be a delicate issue, we can assume that the strategy was exactly that – a boring campaign with one message "Love is love". As we can see from the example of the post in Figure 5.5, the campaign was successful, and in a historic Supreme Court ruling in 2015, gay marriages were declared legal across the US.

Figure 5. 5: Issues in focus of Obama’s posts – minority rights and gun violence



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

The communication about Immigration policy on the Facebook fan page of Barack Obama was reduced to reminding Americans about their history and the stories of their ancestors. The category ‘security, wars, veterans’ is mostly related to the specific policy issues concerning veterans in the US and Croatia, the homeland war in Croatia and terrorism which was a theme in the UK. For instance, Obama advocated the idea of securing jobs for veterans after their service finishes. Many veterans were losing their jobs after they came back from the service, and Obama wanted to change that. Veterans were also often mentioned in speeches dedicated to national holidays, like the Fourth of July. Into this category, I also coded posts related to the war in Iraq. The war in Iraq was the topic to avoid. Even when Obama announced the end of the war, he did not sound convincing, and the posts on Facebook particularly did not look as if America and his Administration had anything to celebrate. Yet that was one of Obama’s promises, and it is obvious that he had paid some attention to that topic. Additional, a topic that was introduced later was related to the criminal justice system which appeared in 3,43% out of all posts on Obama’s page coded in this category (Figure 5.4). Most of these posts were related to gun violence, a topic that Obama very strongly advocated by trying to change the laws

dictating access to guns. Unfortunate events during his term that were caused by gun violence certainly had an impact on his advocacy for this topic. The second topic related to this category was securing a second chance for everyone who gets out of jail.

In Cameron's case, the representation of issues that are related to the economy was unquestionably the most important theme that he was communicating. Issues were the focus of 67% of all of the examined posts, and almost 50% of all of the posts that were dedicated to issues had the economy as the main focus (Figure 5.4). He had really strong and aggressive communication, the goal of which was to convince everyone that the economy in Britain had recovered and that they were in a prosperous period thanks to the different measures that the Conservative government had employed. Moreover, besides highlighting the accomplishments, he often made promises for the future, always related to the economy.

Health policy or any other aspect related with the health was not in the focus of David Cameron. In the context of immigration issues Cameron, although very rarely, referred to diversity of British society. Again, in Cameron's examined posts environmental issues were almost never communicated. Related to the value wars, veterans and security, in Cameron's case coded in this category was issue of security, which was in the focus of noticeable number of cases on his fan page. In this specific case in the examined period Cameron communicated topics related to floods that were happening in the UK and terrorism attacks which were happening across Europe. Although these themes are completely different, these were coded in the category 'security', because the overall focus of the posts was mostly about security, and about what the government and the Prime Minister himself were doing to keep citizens safe.

The specific issue that was introduced in Cameron's case was Brexit. It is interesting to notice that Brexit was often the overall focus in 2016, in the period before the referendum. All of the posts were part of the campaign to "remain". Cameron was trying hard to convince everyone that Britain is better off in the EU. However, as we know, two months of campaigning were not enough to repair what was broken. Especially if we remember that Cameron himself was accusing the EU of taking too much money from Britain. The best example is his post from October 2014, in which he explicitly expressed his anger towards the EU, while, in 2016, he was the leader of the Remain campaign (see example of the posts in the Figure 5.6).

Figure 5. 6: David Cameron communicating Brexit



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'David Cameron'.

It is disappointing for the UK, in the 21st century, to be focused only on these issues, while environmental issues, minority and women's rights, self-fulfilment, etc., were completely neglected. Obviously Cameron was fighting for survival, because of problems with the referendum in Scotland, with local elections in which the Conservative candidate lost the election to be the Mayor of London to the Labour Party candidate, Sadiq Khan, and, of course, Brexit, the infamous referendum that Cameron enabled and which resulted in the UK deciding to leave the EU.

The economy was the first and most mentioned issue also on the fan page of Ivo Josipović. Although the President in Croatia does not have any legitimate or legal powers related to the economy, it is not surprising that 28% of all issue-focused posts were dedicated to it (Figure 5.4). I expected that an even higher number of posts would be focused on the economy, because, during the presidency of Ivo Josipović, Croatia was going through a deep and long economic crisis. Yet Josipović did not overlook the limitations of his office, and he was trying to communicate themes that are within his legal powers. Health policy or any other aspect related with the health was not either in the focus of Ivo Josipović. Also, immigration policy was not a theme in Josipović's communication which can again be explained with the context and the rarity of cases when immigration themes were important during the period when Josipović was president. In the last few years, that agenda has certainly changed in the case of Croatia. Again, in Josipović's examined posts environmental issues were almost never communicated.

'Homeland war' and 'veterans' were the overall focus of more than 14% of all of the posts which had issues in the overall focus on Ivo Josipović's fan page, followed by those topics that are focused on religion and foreign affairs (Figure 5.4). Concerning the Croatian context and

importance of war and war veterans in the public sphere, the finding is not surprising. It is interesting that Josipović, in his posts, mentioned religion quite often like in the post where he congratulated birthday to wellknown priest in Croatia Bonaventura Duda or when he referred to canonisation of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II (see Figure 5.7). Croatia is a mostly Catholic country, but Josipović is a declared agnostic. Using Facebook, he was trying to stress that he understands the importance of religion and religious people. He expressed good wishes for all of the important dates relating to Catholics, Orthodox Catholics, Jews and Muslims, and he was often photographed with priests and at different religious rituals. It was obviously his strategy to become closer to the Catholic majority, but also to gain votes from other minorities. However, his intentions may have been inclusivity, but, on the other hand, sometimes he looked unconvincing and dishonest.

Figure 5. 7: Ivo Josipović and religion



Source: Facebook, 'Ivo Josipović' Fan Page.

To sum up, it can be said that depending on the context of each country, on political characteristics of examined politicians, but also on the global agenda at the moment when the research was conducted, different political actors had an impact on the selection of issues which were communicated. The only exception is the economy which was very often in the focus of all three politicians. This is partly because the effects and consequences of the economic crisis

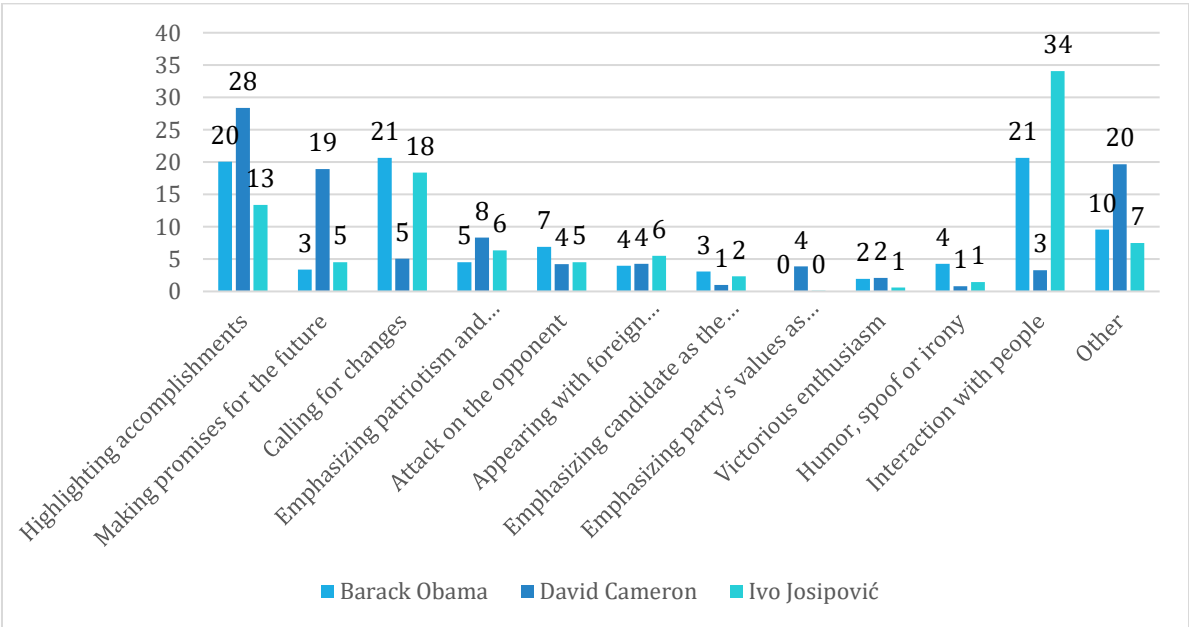
that hit the global economy in 2008 were still visible. Also, some issues like environmental issues and health policy appeared to be relevant only for Obama’s case. The possible explanation is because these themes are associated with the Democratic party whose party member he is and the context in which health policy is an ongoing US problem. In the UK, for instance, economy themes are more associated with the Conservative party whose member Cameron is than with the Labour party. It is expected in that case that he communicated about the economy so often.

In the following section, the dominant strategies used among the three selected leaders are presented. The results for Obama will be firstly presented, following is Cameron and Josipović in the end.

Dominant strategies

Strategies that are tested here are already well studied in the context of election campaigns. My intention was to examine how often these were used during the terms, i.e., are these strategies only short-term strategies, or can the thesis about permanent campaigning on social media be confirmed.

Figure 5. 8: Dominant strategies on Obama’s, Cameron’s and Josipović’s fan pages (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

Firstly, it can be noticed that Obama most often used the highlighting accomplishments strategy (Figure 5.8). That is not a surprising finding if we have in mind that, in the examined time period, he was running for office for the second time and he had to communicate what were his accomplishments. The strategy making promises for the future was used surprisingly rarely, again for the same reason because it would be expected of him that he would more often make promises for his second term. Also, unexpected was that Obama, as an incumbent, was calling for change so often in his Facebook posts. Although the slogan of his first campaign, in 2008, was “Change we can believe in”, the number of posts in that period was too small to significantly affect the results presented in Figure 5.8, suggesting that Obama, although he was in power, often did not have real power to change things which is why he used the “call for changes” strategy in more than 20% of all examined posts on his fan page. Part of the reason probably lies in the fact that he did not control the majority in Congress in his first term as he did in the second term. Another reason is his wish for a deeper change in society concerning health care, environmental issues and majority rights. Issues that were in focus in his second term. In the second term, he signed the Paris Agreement, a treaty about climate change, brought in the Affordable Care Act, or what is better known as Obamacare, and also signed the Iran Nuclear Agreement and re-established relations with Cuba. Without making promises, Obama used Facebook to raise awareness about some topics, to put some issues on the agenda, and to prepare citizens for everything he planned to do in his second term.

Relying on the thesis that personalised political communication can attract voters, it is assumed that “emphasizing the candidate as a source of credibility and a main reason to vote for (Grbeša, 2008)” will be an eagerly used strategy. Yet the results from Figure 5.8 show that this strategy was used on Obama’s fan page in only 3% of all of examined posts. On the one hand, it is understandable that politicians do not explicitly use their official fan pages, which are already personalised with their name and their profile photo, to shout and repeat that they are the best candidate. They are sending that message in a much more sophisticated way. Obama was building the image of a President who brought change on a broader scale, a President who is a family man, like every other American, a citizen who loves and plays baseball and basketball, who eats burgers and pizzas. When it comes to the strategy emphasising party values as the main reason for voting, Obama almost never used this strategy. In the US, the president remains a member of the Party whose candidate he was, but, at the same time, he is indeed the President of all Americans, and Obama definitely acted like that, never mentioning the Democrats. For that reason, strategy emphasising party values was almost never used in his Facebook

communication. Although the President in the US needs the support of the Congress for almost every decision he makes, because of the checks and balances system, he still never used his Facebook fan page to speak directly to them, even when he did not have their support in the Congress.

Obama used ordinary people as dominant strategy in more than 20% of posts (Figure 5.8), putting the focus on his movement and the people gathered in the movement, and how the OFA organisation, in its different forms, was often used to emphasise the power of the people, ordinary citizens promoting important issues. Almost ten percent or 265 posts from all the examined posts could not be coded in any of the suggested categories. I tried to think of some other strategy which could be associated with these posts, but it appeared that some posts indeed looked like they were put there without any specific goal. These were usually pieces of information, without a context and full information about what the post contains.

When we look at Cameron, he most frequently stressed positive results concerning the economy and he also often made promises that the economic situation would be even better, and the UK would be safe from terrorist attacks and other threats (Figure 5.8). These two strategies are specific to the incumbents who are seeking a second term and, knowing that Cameron's posts were examined from 2013 until 2016, covering the last two years of his first term, the election year 2015, and half of 2016, before he resigned in June, the result matches the expectations. Emphasising the candidate as source of credibility was rarely used. Yet, when this strategy was used, Cameron managed to present himself on Facebook as a Prime Minister who works a lot, who is very often among workers on construction sites wearing yellow vests, and who is pushing the UK economy forward. But he very rarely directly asserted that one should vote for him because of his qualities. Also, he sometimes underscored his advantages over opponents from Labour party whose flaws were too big, and sometimes even dangerous for the country. When it comes to "emphasizing the party's values as the main reason to vote for them", we can note that Cameron was mentioning and stressing the importance of his party in nearly 4% of all of examined posts (Figure 5.8). He often campaigned for Conservative local candidates in local elections in 2016. He also sometimes attacked the Labour party for their incompetence concerning the economy and highlighted how the Conservative Party understands the economy much better than the Labour Party.

The Figure 5.8 showing the dominant strategy in the posts demonstrates that, in Cameron's case, ordinary citizens were not used as a dominant strategy (3%), although they were present in many photos. These posts in which ordinary citizens were in the photos, did not focus on them, but the focus was mostly on the economy, highlighting accomplishments that caused the economy to grow (28%), or making promises for the future (19%). Ordinary citizens, presented as workers, had a role to prove that Britain was working at full steam, that the economy was recovering, thanks to him and the Conservative government. We also see that very often (in 20% of posts) the dominant strategy in Cameron's case could not be determined, or it was something else. The answer mainly lies in the fact that Cameron's posts were usually informative, they often did not have a photo, and their main function was to provide information about something. These posts, as their overall focus, mostly had announcements or issues. Many were related to information about the floods, security, and the economy. Announcements were often used to express condolence to the families of past officials, victims of terrorist attacks, but were also about his daily activities.

The third leader, the former Croatian President, Ivo Josipović, was not making promises because the president's role in Croatia is limited by the constitution and gives the president formal power only in foreign affairs and in national security and defence. As already mentioned, he followed the rules and was not making promises that he would not be able to fulfil. He could also not take credit for any changes made in the country during his term, because he was not directly accountable for them, but he did stress his role in changes made to some laws. Again, Josipović often called for changes in 18,38% posts (Figure 5.8), which is a strategy not that commonly used by incumbents, from whom we would expect the keeping of *status quo*. Moreover, the party which supported him in the elections, the SDP, was in power for one part of his term, so the change he called for did not refer to parliamentary elections. It was thus probably confusing for voters when he proposed changes.

Emphasising the candidate as the main reason to vote in Josipović's case was very rarely used, in less than 3% of all of the examined posts on his fan page (Figure 5.8). Emphasising the party as the main reason to vote, like in the US case was never used as a dominant strategy. In Croatia, it is even a constitutional obligation that a candidate, once they win the Presidential elections, must leave the party if s/he was a member of any party. The President is expected not to make any difference between parties, and this is important because the President's duty during parliamentary elections is to give a term for assembling the government to the mandator who

gathers the largest number of seats in the parliament. Since post-election coalitions are not rare in Croatia, sometimes this can be a tricky job. Although the SDP supported Ivo Josipović, he never mentioned the party in his posts. Besides the constitutional rules, one of the reasons why he never mentioned the SDP is also the fact that he needed support from other voters, who are not SDP supporters, but who are left-oriented and liberal. The strategy that was often used was interaction with ordinary citizens. In Josipović's case, ordinary citizens were the strategy of the post in more than 34% of all of examined posts (Figure 5.8). These posts mostly had campaigning and announcements as their overall focus, and then the strategy was to show the support of so many people who were gathered around Josipović. Further, Josipović wanted to appear as a man of the people. That is why he was among citizens so often, although he often did not look authentic in that role. Here, we notice how, in Josipović's case, only appearing among citizens did not help to make him look like a man of the people.

There are many other differences between the selected politicians in terms of the strategies that they used in their posts. While some of the strategies were derived from the previous work of Kaid and Johnston (2001) and Grbeša (2008), who conducted similar analyses on newspaper articles and video spots, these worked very well and were coded without any second thoughts, for many of the posts these existing strategies were not applicable. One of the added categories is the focus on ordinary citizens. As we saw in previous paragraphs, this category was very often used by Josipović and Obama, while Cameron rarely used it. However, all three politicians have many posts that were coded in the category "Other", especially David Cameron (Figure 5.8). In all of the cases in this category, it was usually informative posts that were coded, without any specific strategy. This finding supports previous research, which says that, concerning political communication, Facebook is often used as a notice clipboard, a platform which, in many cases, has replaced press releases.

In the context of added strategy related to different ways of interacting with citizens, in the next paragraphs it will be analysed in more detail how Barack Obama strategically used the OFA organisation, which was built and driven by ordinary people gathered around him.

OFA case

A new value introduced for dominant strategy was: "Interaction with ordinary citizens", which was used when ordinary citizens were the main focus, with their stories or testimonials and/or Obama inviting them to participate in different activities. As we can see from Figure 5.8,

20.65% of all of the examined posts was coded in this category, and a large share of these posts was related to the activities of the OFA organisation. The OFA organisation was a crucial part of Obama's strategy in building his image, in winning the elections and in conducting his policies. The case deserves special attention and further research. It is a brilliant case study of a movement that was built from nothing, in cohesion between ordinary citizens and one politician. On the official web page of the OFA organisation, it says that: "OFA is a non-partisan progressive grassroots network, fuelled by millions of volunteers, that has been fighting for years to move our country forward. OFA does two things: mobilise and organise. We mobilize grassroots supporters to win key issue fights...". It also says that the: "OFA was started by former Obama aides after his re-election... and that his deep belief in the power of ordinary people to come together to enact change has always been at OFA's core", but that he does not have an official role in the organization." However, the description of the current organisation does not refer to the former organisation, "Organizing for America", which was founded by Barack Obama during his first days in office, on January 17th, 2009.

It is indicative to note that he launched the organisation with a video message that was sent to a mailing list of 13 million people who had already participated in his campaign in 2008, and who started "the biggest grassroots movement ever", as Obama said in the video message which was also sent to all the media (Cillizza, 2009, January 17). The biggest movement that he refers to started around his campaign in 2008, and at that time it was called "Obama for America". Now, we can see that OFA stands for three different organisations: Obama for America, Organizing for America and Organizing for Action (Figure 5.9). The first organisation helped Obama to build the movement and took him to office. It was also the first glorified "information-age campaign" (Milkis & York, 2015, July 29). Beyond that, it was a candidate-centred campaign, which is suggested by the name of the organisation. The second organisation, which was transformed from the first one, was launched in his first term in 2009, in order to help him to keep his supporters, volunteers and voting base. Organizing for America "was inserted in the DNC, where it was tasked with several things: mobilising support for Obama's signature program, the Affordable Care Act; supporting Democratic midterm campaigns; and keeping alive — even strengthening— Obama's grass-roots network and voter and contributor databases, to be ready for the President's re-election campaign" (ibid). In 2013 the OFA morphed into Organizing for Action, a non-partisan progressive grassroots network, issue-oriented and fighting for the policies that Obama advocated during his years in office. Today,

the organisation is merged with the National Redistricting Action Fund and called “All on the line” (allontheline.com).

Figure 5. 9: OFA and how it changed over time



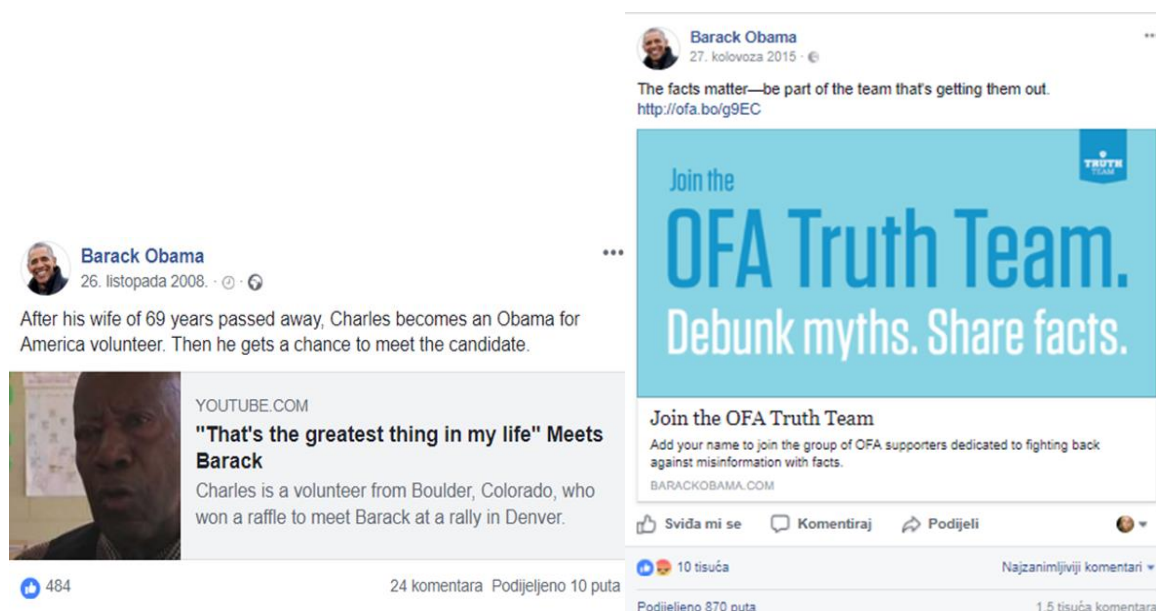
Source: Author’s own presentation.

As stated in the description of the third OFA organisation, their mission is fighting to move the country forward, mobilising and organising, giving a voice to ordinary people. Most often, their strategy was just to share the stories of people who had already joined the action, or were just inviting others to join, as demonstrated in the first example (Figure 5.10). It is interesting to see in examples of posts in the Figure 5.10, where we can see that the OFA had a kind of special division called the OFA Truth Team. Although they never mentioned ‘fake news’, it is obvious that this was their way of fighting fake news, one piece of which was the so-called birth theory that was spreading a lie that Obama was not born in the US. OFA fought this misinformation, for instance, by selling cups showing Obama’s birth certificate, which was proof that Obama was born in the US. They also took many other actions, which completely overlapped Obama’s political program and the issues he was advocating. I believe that this was a very smart strategy – to make people fight for issues that they care about, and then you appear to be a person who supports these issues.

Although maybe some of these posts could have been coded in the category “calling for changes”, but that would have been false, because in most cases it was indeed only a call for participation or information about some event that OFA’s supporters organised. In this category, I also coded posts in which all sorts of campaign materials were on sale. That these posts were oriented towards grassroots campaigning tells us also the result, which shows that 49.31% of the posts in this category had campaigning as an overall focus, and 9% were Announcements, while 24.39% had issues as the overall focus. 49.22% of the posts from this

category were motivational, calling for enrolment in the OFA's activities, and 35% were informational. The category that might be relevant, and that was not included in my code sheet, is "keep working", which is one of the most often used versions of the slogans that the incumbents used to win the next term. However, this strategy is almost exclusively related to the OFA organisation, inviting OFA supporters to further engagement. That strategy was often used after Obama won a second term, which shows us that this was his strategy in order to keep issues he found important on the agenda. It has already been mentioned that many of these posts even had issues as the overall focus. In these posts, OFA supporters' activities were also presented, mostly without Obama, but sometimes he was also motivating citizens to join different actions.

Figure 5. 10: OFA team in 2008 and 2015



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'Barack Obama'.

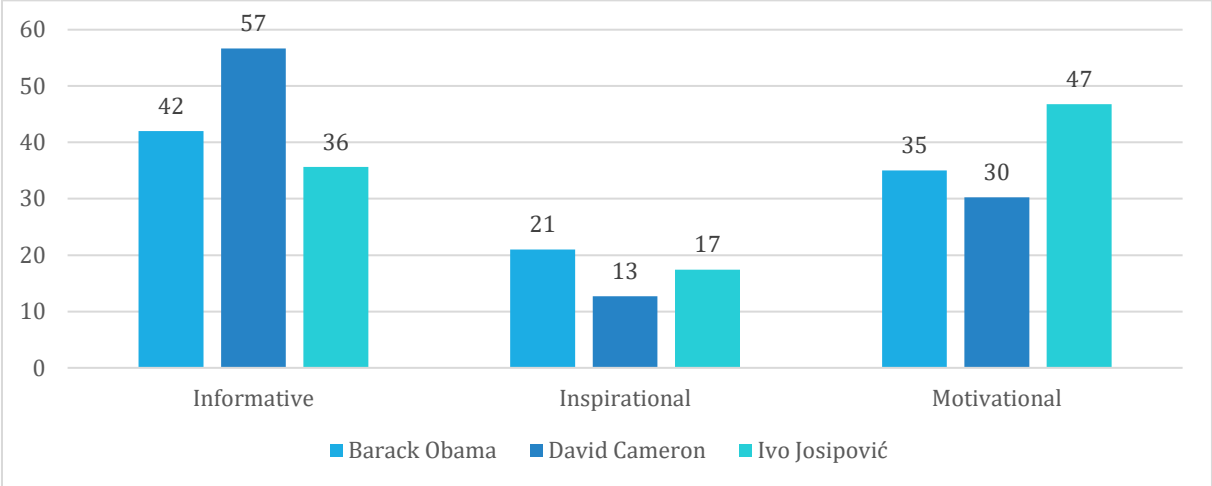
In the next section, the results of the type of posts used on Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's page are discussed together with the results which revealed how often these politicians invited their Facebook fans to different actions.

Type of posts and Call for action

The dominant strategy of the posts is also closely related to the category type of posts to which I have introduced three main categories, in order to reveal what was the main function of the post, to give some information, to inspire, or to motivate citizens to certain actions. The results

shown in Figure 5.11 demonstrate that most of the examined posts in Obama’s case were coded as being informational (41.98%), which means that the purpose of these posts was to inform about something, to give certain facts, data, evidence, information.

Figure 5. 11: Type of the posts on Obama’s, Cameron’ and Josipović’s Facebook (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

Hence, as we can see from Figure 5.11, more than half of the posts were inspirational or motivational. Looking at the proposed examples of motivational and inspirational posts in Figure 5.12 we will see once again how majestic his team was in emotionalizing issues and in making us really feel what he wanted us to feel when viewing these posts. This tells us that his official Facebook fan page was mainly used as a platform for motivating and inspiring citizens. Keeping in mind OFA’s activities, which were often promoted on his page, that does not surprise us.

Cameron had the highest number of informative posts, in which he was providing information about the economy and about the different activities in which he was taking part. The strategy of these posts was also highlighting accomplishments, through using specific numbers and data and making promises for the second term and the future of all Britons. Almost 70% of all of the informative posts had these two strategies, or “other”, as the dominant strategy of the post. He was also eager to motivate citizens, not only to support him and the Conservatives but also to motivate them to work and build a better future, because the economy was recovering. In 60% of all of the motivational posts, the dominant strategies were highlighting accomplishments and making promises for the future. Again, we see how fixated Cameron was on the economy, and how everything was subordinated to economic questions.

Figure 5. 12: Type of the post – motivational and inspirational



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'Barack Obama'.

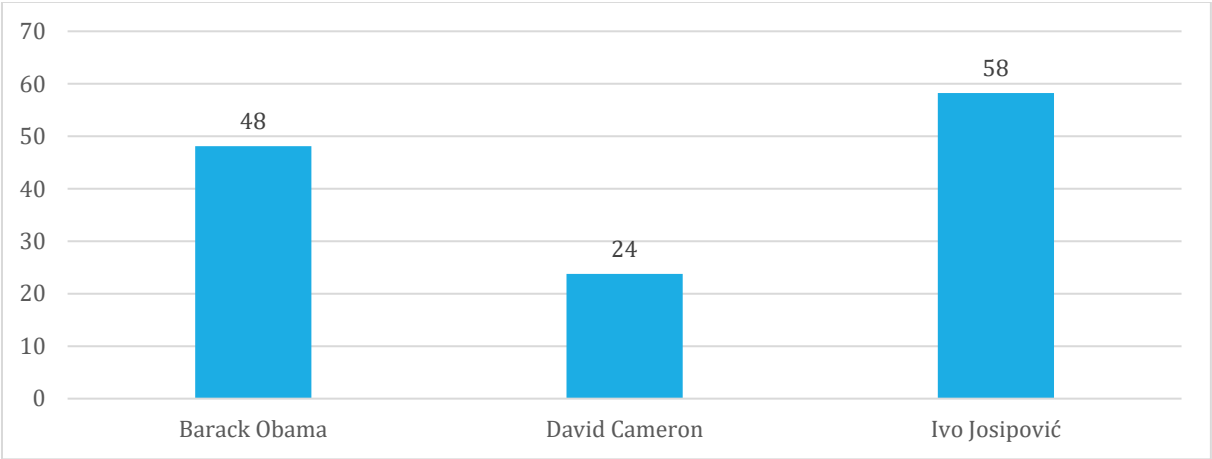
The former Croatian president most often used motivational posts, in more than 46% of all examined posts on his Facebook (Figure 5.11). This finding is expected because he used his Facebook fan page primarily for campaigning. Many of his posts were informational, providing different information, often about the events and everyday activities of the president.

Connected with the type of the post is the category call for action which reveals how often Obama, Cameron and Josipović were inviting Facebook fans to different kinds of actions.

The results revealed that Obama often invited citizens to off- and online actions connected to campaigning on different issues; in nearly 50% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.13). The findings also showed that he used calls for action especially often when the posts had Issues, Rebuttal and Controversies, Electoral process and Campaigning as their Overall focus. The finding is expected, because the strategy of his fan page was to develop a movement, which is why diverse types of calls for action were often used, from online petitions to different invitations to participate in OFA activities across the country. Fundraising was one of the very important, and very often mentioned, topics in this category. Obama's fan page served as a vital

channel for collecting donations to his election campaigns, but also for other OFA activities. Obama was inviting his supporters and sympathisers to “Chip in”, to donate small amounts of money to his campaign, and to become a part of the movement that would make a change in the country. Today, it is well-known how important small donations were for Obama. His entire campaign was mostly funded by micro-donations. Although the importance of social media in election campaign fundraising is indisputable, the focus of this thesis was not on the elections and campaigning, which is why I did not examine in more detail how often, and in which way, fundraising was operating on this fan page. I have already explained in previous chapters that, in the category Controversies, many posts were related to the election of Judge Merrick. In these posts, citizens were often invited to sign online petitions or to add their names to sign-in forms saying “enough” and asking Congressmen to “do their job” by electing Judge Merrick to the Supreme Court. Other similar initiatives were often promoted on the fan page. As expected, 50% of all posts in the category call for action related to different campaign activities, those usually organised by OFA, which were inviting citizens to join them at the meetings and rallies but also to support them online by propagating important themes.

Figure 5. 13: Call for action (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

Cameron, on the other hand, used this engagement tool in only 22% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.13). In relation with this category is also the value campaigning in their overall focus which was in the overall focus in 7% of all of the examined posts. This finding tells that Cameron was less interested in engaging with citizens and that he did not use Facebook to campaign.

Ivo Josipović was most eager to call for actions, which he did in almost 60% of all posts (5.13). This is not surprising if we bear in mind that Josipović had campaigning in the overall focus of 33% of all posts and that more than 46% of all posts were motivational. Josipović often invited citizens to attend his conventions, and also conducted a ‘get out to vote’ campaign on his Facebook fan page. That can be explained by what was previously said: that he used Facebook intensively during the campaign and posted more frequently.

Type of the post and call for action were in this context primarily used as indicators of political content, although the intention of politicians to motivate and inspire citizens also reveals elements of personalisation. It can be said, especially in Obama’s case, who often used inspirational posts that these posts were his personal trademark. Also, numerous motivational posts and calls for action in Josipović’s case reveal that he used Facebook to try to engage citizens.

In the next section general indicator of personalisation described as visibility of politicians in photos is elaborated.

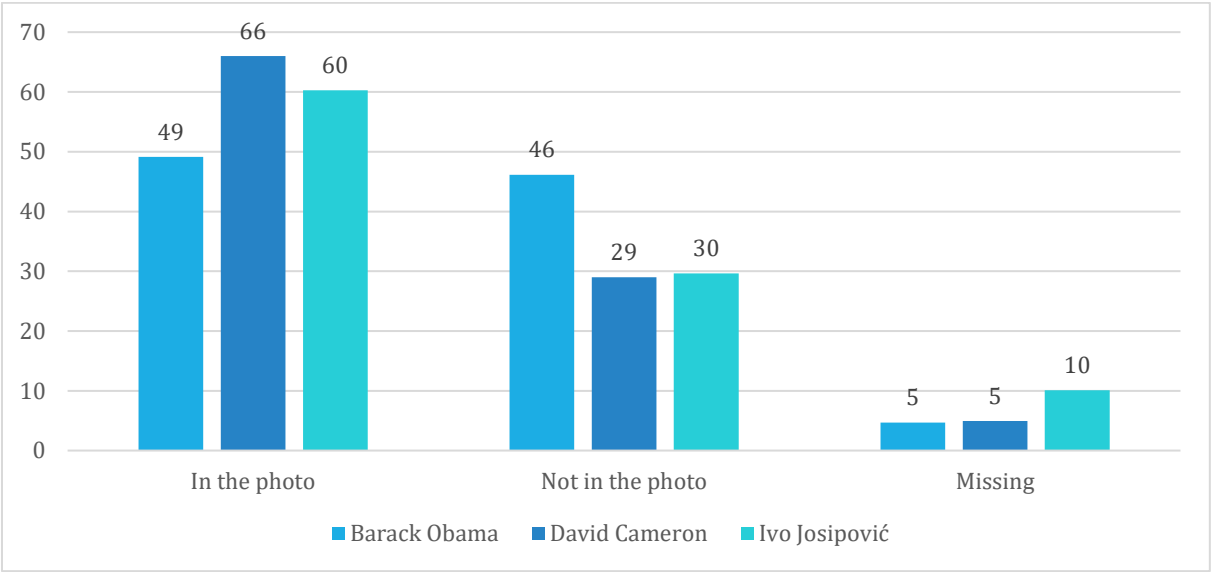
Visibility of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in their Facebook posts

While explaining the methodology used in this dissertation, I have stressed that having photos in my research was the biggest asset, because most research is usually conducted only on the textual part of the posts. This is not surprising since scraping of the posts with photos and/or videos is much harder than scraping only the textual parts. However, in many cases a photo can completely change the meaning of the message. Without photos it would have been almost impossible to test one of the most important dimensions of personalisation, which is the visibility of the individual (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014). For this reason, photos have been coded together with the textual part, as a whole. Just counting the mentions of Obama’s, Cameron’s and Josipović’s name and surname in the posts would probably have given distorted results, because mentioning your own name in the posts on your own fan page is not very typical of Facebook communication. Because of that, it was necessary to code the photos for the presence of a leader.

Looking at Figure 5.14, the first thing that we notice is Obama’s absence in 46% of the examined photos. Most of the photos in which he was not present also come from the second term, meaning that he was not present in 55.69% of all of the examined photos in his second

term. For comparison, in the first term, he was not present in 27.98%. These findings suggest that personalisation was used more in his first presidential term. However, we should bear in mind that Obama had photos in more than 90% of all examined posts (Figure 5.1), which would mean that in general, his photo was present in nearly 50% of all posts including also posts which did not have photos.

Figure 5. 14: Political actors’ presence in the photos (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

David Cameron was present in 66% of all examined photos in the posts which contained photos (Figure 5.14). Although this high number seems to indicate strong personalisation, it has to be recalled that in Cameron’s case more than 40% of all of the examined posts did not contain photos (Figure 5.1). Yet, even when we look at how often he appeared in the posts, also taking into account posts that did not contain photos, the number is still high, indicating more than 50% of all posts that were published on his Facebook fan page contained his photo.

The former Croatian president Josipović was also very often present in the posted photos, with a presence rate of 60% (Figure 5.14). Also, Josipović did not have photos in almost 24% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.1). Again, the result reveals that he was present in almost 46% of all of the examined posts even when posts without photos are taken into account.

Presence of examined politicians in different settings in the photos in which they appear will be discussed in the next subchapter in the context of humanisation which is defined as one of

the main goals of privatisation of political communication. In this context it is discussed how often other politicians, their colleagues, members of their office, their team, members of their party or foreign officials were present in examined politicians' Facebook communication. Presence of other politicians in posts tells how much emphasis is placed on one individual, and not on the party, team and other political actors. In this research, that was examined by looking at the presence of other politicians in photos. For instance, in Obama's case other politicians were present in only 13,69% examined posts, which again supports the notion that his communication on Facebook was the most personalised and focused on his persona.

In Cameron's case, other politicians appeared in around 24% of all examined posts which had a photo. The presence of other politicians in the photos is also an indicator of different political systems in examined cases. Cameron as a Prime Minister and member of the Conservative party obviously more often appeared with his colleagues but also promoted them and he was helping them during the campaigning for local elections.

Other politicians were present in 18,63% examined posts with photos on the Facebook fan page of Ivo Josipović. The presence of other politicians was related to his presidential duties where he had many ceremonial duties, events and official meetings with other statesmen.

Relying on Kaid and Johnston's (2002) differentiation between image and issues in political communication, this part of the analysis intended to reveal what was the character and intensity of personalisation of examined politicians on their Facebook fan pages. The first questions related to the Overall focus of the posts revealed that political and private profile were rarely in the focus in the communication of Obama, Cameron and Josipović. Moreover, it is revealed that the emphasis was on different issues, primarily the economy, and issues which were specific for each separate case. The findings also supported the notion that Obama and Josipović extensively used their Facebook fan pages for campaigning, while that was not often the case on Cameron's Facebook fan page. Another category employed to reveal the character of personalisation was the dominant strategy which was used in the posts. The findings showed that emphasis on Obama, Cameron or Josipović as individuals was rarely used as a dominant strategy. However, it is revealed that some other strategies were used to "humanise" communication, like interaction with ordinary citizens. Also, the presence of inspirational and motivational posts, especially in Obama's case is a clear indicator of efforts to personalise

communication through the language often marked with emotional quotes and motivational messages.

One of the most often used indicators of personalisation is visibility which is often measured as the presence of politicians in the photos. It is interesting to note that all three examined politicians appeared often when the posts had a photo. From these findings, it can be concluded that the visibility of examined politicians was significant in posts they posted on official Facebook fan pages.

After presenting the results of different indicators of one dimension of personalisation of political communication, indicators of privatisation of political personae will be presented in the following pages.

5.2 Privatisation in Facebook posts of Obama, Cameron and Josipović

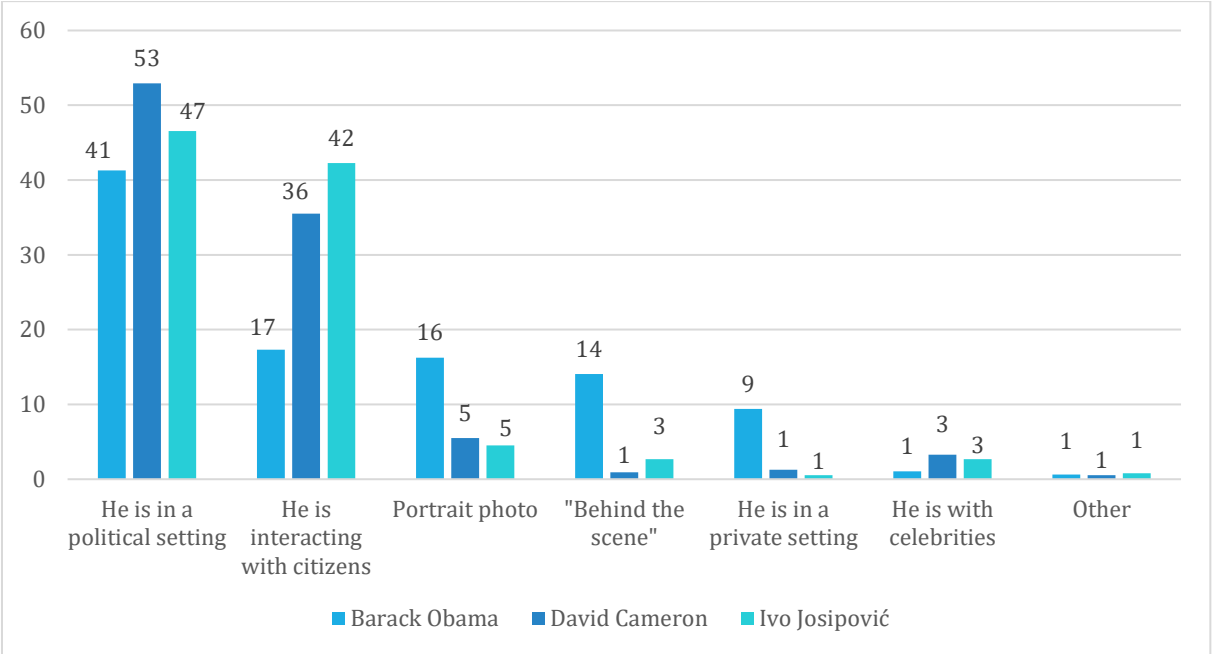
Holtz-Bacha (2004, pp. 49-50) detected four directions for privatisation: humanisation, simplification and distraction, emotionalization and acquiring celebrity status. First presented will be indicators of humanisation in examined cases. Primarily, the presence of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in different settings, presence and references to ordinary people in posts, their outfit and use of humour and irony as a dominant strategy. While the use of private and family lives is considered to be one of the humanisation techniques, in this case, it will be discussed and presented separately. Also, simplification and distraction were not examined. It is argued in previous chapters that a Facebook post by its' definition is some form of simplification. Especially when complex political issues and topics are communicated in that form. Lastly, emotionalization will be discussed in the context of privatisation, while striving for celebrity status will be elaborated in the next subchapter in the context of popularisation of politics.

Humanisation

Humanisation is detected through different techniques. One of them is the appearance of politicians in different settings, which is also mentioned as an indicator of personalisation. Different settings in which politicians appear are political setting, private setting, with citizens, with celebrities, along with the values which were added for this research: portrait photo and

behind the scenes photos. The findings in Figure 5.15 show how often examined politicians appeared in which setting.

Figure 5. 15: Obama, Cameron and Josipović in the photos (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

Obama was most often photographed in the political setting; in 41% of all posts in which Obama appears in the photo (Figure 5.15). Yet, it is important to note in this context that other politicians/officials/party members appeared in only 13,7% of all the examined posts, which means that although he was often photographed in a political setting, he did not appear in that setting with other politicians, meaning that the focus was on his political persona. Following, the rare appearance of other politicians could be interpreted as an indicator of personalisation and high visibility of Obama himself. Obviously, he did not use his Facebook fan page to promote his team, other politicians and statesman. In the context of visibility as an indicator of personalisation and humanisation, which is also discussed in the previous subchapter, it is interesting to note Obama’s portrait photos which were posted in more than 16% of all posts in which he was present in photos. As already mentioned in the Empirical chapter, his retouched and stylised portrait photos became a recognisable brand. Social media certainly helped in achieving that goal.

Likewise, another interesting setting in which Obama appeared and which could be interpreted as an indicator of humanisation is value “behind the scenes” which appeared in 14,13% of posts in which Obama was present in the photo (Figure 5.15). Photos from this category, in some cases, could also have been coded in the category “in the political setting”, and in some other categories, because very often these photos were taken to look as if they were taken “behind the scenes” as if they were completely spontaneous and taken unintentionally, and as if Obama didn’t even know that the photo was being taken. Even though this kind of photo was often situated in a political setting, I still coded it as “behind the scenes” because that was the prevailing setting of the photo. These photos can also be interpreted as a beginning of the “de-professionalisation” trend which according to Kreiss and Jasinski more or less started with the 2012 Obama campaign (2016, p. 15). A characteristic of these photos was also that they were often photographed from a distance, or he was photographed from the back, which means that his face wasn’t visible in 55.68% of these photos. It is also interesting to note, that although Obama’s face was, in most cases, not even visible, 63.78% of the photos in this category were coded for the presence of emotional appeals. This means that even the photos taken from the back had an emotional effect.

Moreover, the White House official photographer, Pete Souza, named some of the shots “behind the scenes” photos. These photos seem to be used as a strategy to get media attention, but also to get closer to citizens by giving them insights into what is happening “behind the scenes”. From the following example, we can see that sometimes these photos have been taken to look like the photo of a pop star. In this particular photo, we see Obama coming out onto the stage, photographed from the back in black and white (see first example in Figure 5.17). For instance, *The Guardian*, in 2012, published an article entitled “Barack Obama's presidency: behind the scenes – in pictures”. As they write in the article: “The photographs offer a rare portrait of what it is like to be President of the United States (Stone, 2012, October 18).” Also, 64.33% of the photos coded in this category were posted from 2009 to 2012, which tells us that this form of “de-professionalisation” was also used before the 2012 campaign. These photos very often had the signature of the photographer, Pete Souza, which tells us how the strategy was changing over time. I have already mentioned that sometimes many posts, with the descriptions of the photos, were posted at the same time, and these were mostly postings that contained photos from the category “behind the scenes”. In this context, Obama rarely appeared with celebrities, but he sometimes appeared as a celebrity himself. Also, he was featured in a private setting in

around 8% of all photos in which he was present (Figure 5.15). Other elements of privatisation will be discussed in more details in the following section.

The most favoured setting in which David Cameron often appeared was a political setting, in 53% of all photos in which he appeared (Figure 5.15). The political setting here included numerous visits to different factories and other settings related to the economy. He rarely used portrait photos, photos in his private settings, with celebrities and behind the scenes photos. It can be said that his appearance in the photos had only one purpose, to promote economy issues which were in the focus of his communication on Facebook. However, he did appear among ordinary citizens quite often, especially if we recall that he rarely used Facebook for campaigning. Cameron rarely appeared in a private setting and with celebrities. In the next paragraphs, it is discussed how he interacted with ordinary citizens.

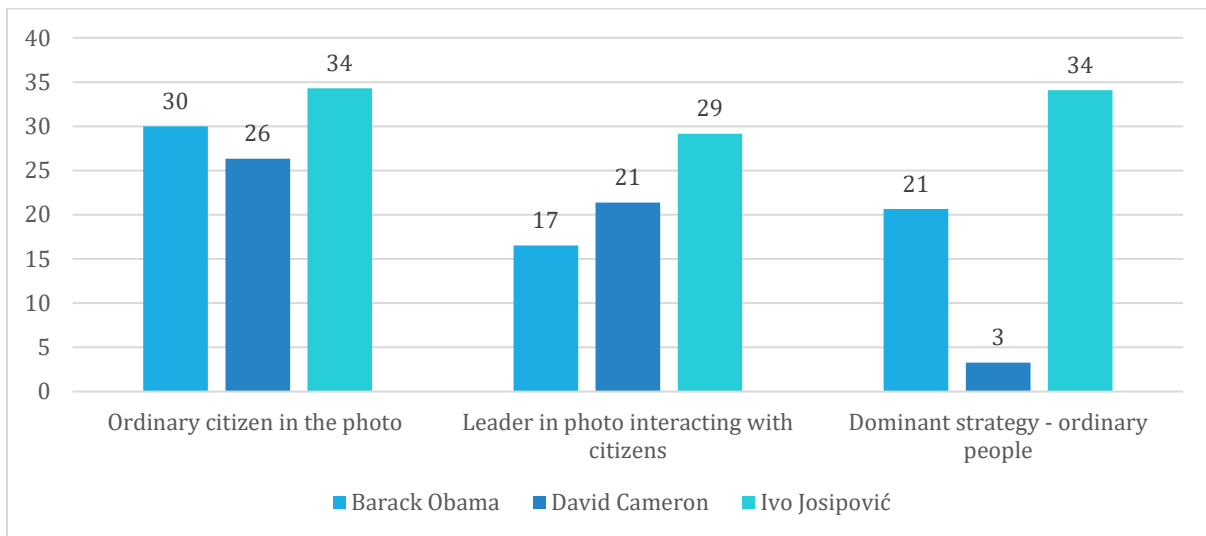
Ivo Josipović, as expected, also most often appeared in the political setting (47%) and interacting with ordinary citizens (42%). Other settings were underrepresented on his Facebook fan page (Figure 5.15).

Humanisation through ordinary people

It has been elaborated in the Empirical chapter that some of the indicators of humanisation techniques used in this research are also different actors that appear in the photos in examined posts, leaders' outfit, use of humour, spoof and irony. The first category that will be discussed is the appearance of ordinary people in photos of examined politicians, the second is Obama, Cameron and Josipović featured in interaction with ordinary citizens and the third is when ordinary people also appeared to be the dominant strategy of the post. Lastly, it is discussed how often examined politicians appeared in a casual outfit and what was their facial expression in the photos.

The results (Figure 5.16) show that Barack Obama appeared in the photos with ordinary people in more than 16% of all photos in which he was present (see example in Figure 5.17). Also, it is revealed that ordinary citizens were often in the photos without him, in total they appeared in 30% of all examined posts on his fan page. Furthermore, ordinary citizens were often used as a dominant communication strategy in Obama's posts (21%). These results clearly indicate that the presence of ordinary people was an important element in Obama's Facebook

Figure 5. 16: Ordinary people in posts (%)



Source: Author's own calculation.

communication. Moreover, it can be assumed that he also wanted to send a message that he is just one of them and that ordinary people are the most important to him and that these people represent him. For instance, ordinary citizens were quite often in the photos on Obama's fan page, and in half of these photos, Obama was not even present (420/803). These ordinary citizens were usually OFA supporters, who took actions on their own that usually did not even include Obama. Ordinary citizens also appeared in testimonials, mainly to explain how Obamacare saved their lives, and how, without the Obamacare package of healthcare, they would probably be dead, because they could not afford medical treatments themselves. Obviously, in this case, the purpose of the citizens' presence in the photos was to promote issues. Although Obama was the central figure in promoting these issues and reforms that, in the case of healthcare, even had his name in the title, it seems that he wanted the movement to continue and without him. Interestingly, the presence of interest groups in photos was very rare (3,84%). This finding was surprising to some extent, because Obama communicated a lot about different issues which are often related to specific interest groups. However, it seems that he wanted to avoid being associated with those groups and stay focused on ordinary people instead.

Obama's outfit was also mentioned as an indicator of humanisation, assuming that he will appear in a casual outfit if he wants to look like an ordinary citizen, like a simple American. Following, he wore a casual outfit in 13,66% and the combined casual and formal outfit in almost 18% of the posts in which he was present in the photo. Casual outfit usually referred to situations when he was in sneakers, in sweatpants, short pants, T-shirts and similar, while the

Figure 5. 17: Obama in “Behind the scenes photos” and with ordinary people



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

combined outfit was coded when he was in a shirt with sleeves rolled up, or any other situation when he was not wearing a formal outfit with a suit and tie. Based on these findings it can be concluded that Obama very carefully weighs between appearing as a serious and strong president and an “ordinary” citizen who understands other ordinary people and their problems and is very compassionate. His compassion for ordinary people came to fore especially during unfortunate events, like in the aftermath of the superstorm Sandy, but also in any other accident. Another finding that supports the notion that Obama was very good at balancing his serious political personae vs. ordinary private personae is his facial expression. The results revealed that he looked serious and cold in 35% of all posts in which he appears in photos, while his facial expression was warm, smiling and friendly in 36% of all posts where he was present in a photo.

David Cameron also had ordinary citizens present quite often in the photos (in 26% of all examined posts with photos, Figure 5.16), but these ordinary citizens were usually workers in

the different companies that Cameron was visiting frequently. These workers could have probably been coded in the category “interest group”, but I still wanted to differentiate between ordinary employees from company owners and other representatives of interest groups, who appeared in 6,51% of all examined posts on Cameron’s fan page. Among interest groups, farmers, fishermen, different religious groups and many others were present. Cameron’s goal was to show that Britain is working and growing, and he had a very clear strategy as to how he would achieve this. Besides focusing on the economy, putting workers and interest groups ahead, he very often appeared in yellow vests with the protective helmet that is often seen on construction sites, in factories or flooded areas, and wherever it was necessary to be. In around 50 photos, he was in the high-visibility jacket which makes an appearance in around 10% of all the posts in which he is present. He appeared interacting with these ordinary people in 21% of all examined photos in which he was present (see Figure 5.18). Yet, ordinary citizens were dominant strategy in his posts in only around 3% of all examined posts on his page. Wearing a shirt with rolled-up sleeves to give the impression that you are working hard, is an already well-tested tactic among politicians. Tony Blair was a big fan of the “sleeves rolled up, let’s get down to work” look (BBC, 2016, June 24), and David Cameron also often appeared wearing that look, but he definitely moved a few steps forward by wearing the yellow vests so often. Obama similarly liked wearing his sleeves rolled up but, as we saw, he almost never wore yellow vests although his first term was as dedicated to the economy as Cameron’s was.

Figure 5. 18: Cameron with ordinary people



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘David Cameron’.

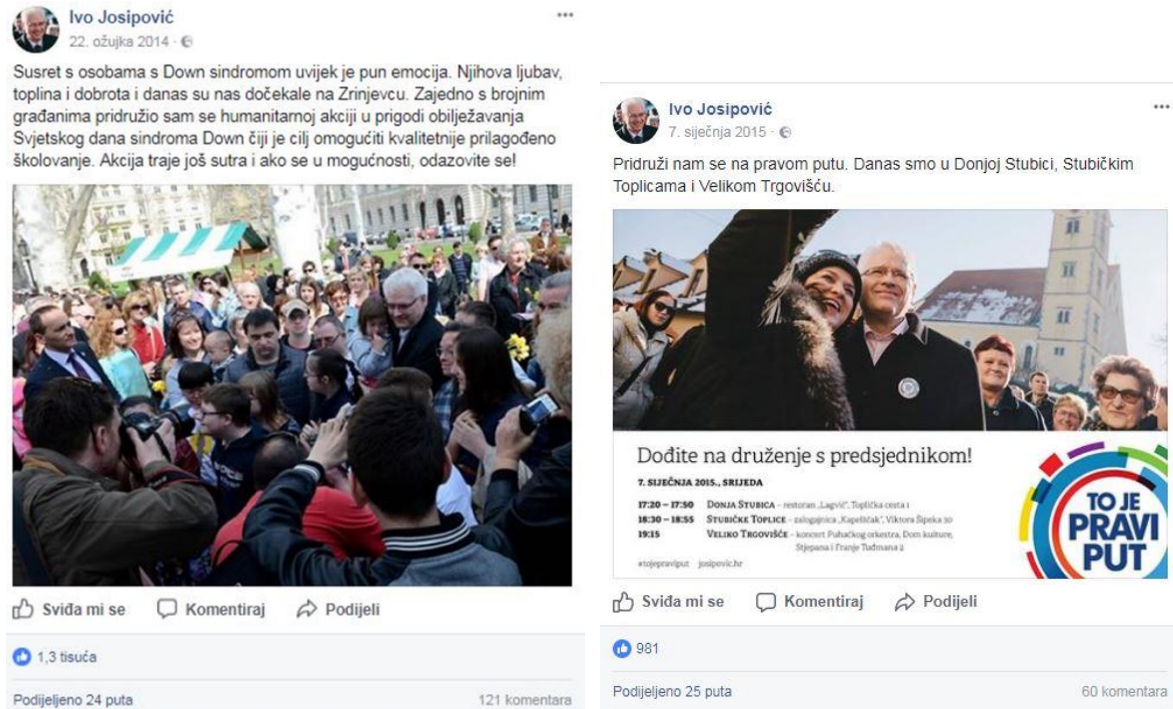
When talking about the outfits, the analysis revealed that in 64% of all photos in which he was present, Cameron appeared in a formal outfit, while he appeared in informal and combined outfits in 35% of examined cases. This means that most of the time he was in a suit and tie. Yet, the number of photos in which he was presented in more relaxed outfit, 35% percent, shows that he also tried to appear in a different light, mostly like a hard worker on the field, as we already discussed.

In Croatia, Ivo Josipović was very often trying to appear more affable, more in touch with ordinary people. He used two strategies of humanisation to achieve this. The first was appearing with ordinary citizens and familiarly interacting with them. Ordinary citizens were present in almost 35% of all of the examined posts with photos on Josipović's fan page (Figure 5.16) and in many of them, Josipović was featured informally interacting with citizens (29%). Also, citizens were dominant strategy in his posts very often in 34% of all examined posts. It can be concluded that Josipović most often interacted with ordinary citizens in order to appear closer to his voters and thus to present himself as being simple and approachable. In most of these photos, he was smiling (25%), and these are mostly campaign photos, from rallies, conventions, concerts (see example of the posts in the Figure 5.19). Yet he was always in a formal outfit, a suit with a tie, and almost never in casual clothes or in a combination of formal and casual, e.g., a suit without a tie, shirt with a tie, but without the suit, etc. In that aspect, he probably continued to be pictured as a professor of law and a piano composer, a member of the Croatian elite. He implemented the strategy "smile and appear among the ordinary citizens", in order produce the impression that you are just one of them. However, citizens now recognise different communication tactics and spins. As we discussed in the theoretical chapter, often the use and overuse of these tactics lead to cynicism and apathy among citizens, because, at some point, they think that every politician is just acting and pretending, to get into power, and that nobody is honest and that they just work for their own interests. Interest groups were rarely found in photos in his case as well (4,66%) which means that he also rather wanted to keep ordinary people in the focus.

The reason why he appeared in a formal outfit in almost 90% of all photos in which he was present while casual and combined outfits were present in only ten percent of the cases, is probably in the fact that he is older from Obama and Cameron, but also that Croatia is more conservative than the US and the UK. The findings confirm the assumption that the

communication style depends a lot on individual characteristics of a candidate and also on the political culture of the specific country.

Figure 5. 19: Josipović with ordinary people



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Ivo Josipović’.

More than anything, the politician today needs to appear authentic. The win of Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton in the US Presidential elections in 2016 is the best proof of this. Trump was authentic, his strategy was amateurism, and that certainly had a stronger impression on voters than Hillary and the PR machine behind her, with their thoroughly tested and planned steps and messages. Josipović was not authentic; photos with clerics, from religious ceremonies, “hanging” with ordinary citizens and listening to rock music, were certainly hard to connect with the law professor, who is an agnostic and a piano composer.

As was presented earlier, the use of humour, irony and spoof was very rarely used as a dominant communication strategy in examined posts. This finding confirms that in all three cases communication was mostly professional and rarely relaxed. Yet, it was discussed that motivational and in Obama’s case inspirational posts were quite often used on Facebook, which can be considered as another way of humanisation.

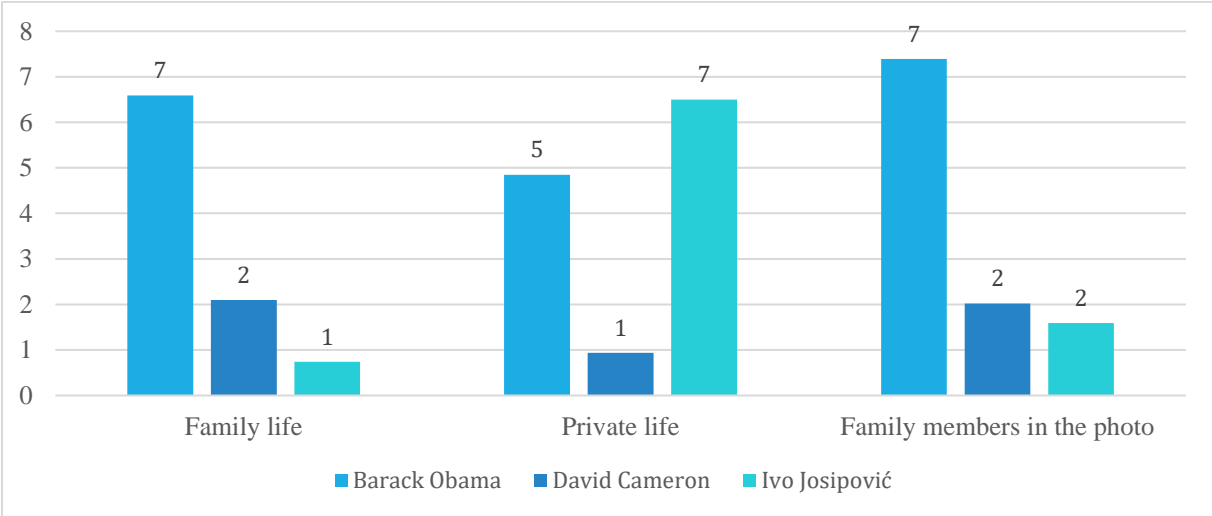
To sum up, the findings of presence of examined politicians in different settings shows that Obama, Cameron and Josipović appeared dominantly in a political setting, while other settings which are considered to be indicators of humanisation like private setting, behind the scene photos, and even portrait photos were found only in Obama’s case. Cameron and Josipović stayed in “conservative” well-tried settings, while Obama also used some other categories to appear closer to citizens. However, it can be noticed that all three politicians often appeared interacting with ordinary citizens, which is considered to be clear evidence of the use of humanisation techniques.

Additionally, as another indicator of humanisation, the private lives of politicians come to focus. In the following pages, it will be analysed how and to what extent Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović used their private lives in communication on their Facebook fan pages.

Private lives of Obama, Cameron and Josipović on Facebook

One of the main goals of this research was to reveal how often the examined political actors used their private lives as a strategy to get closer to citizens, and in what way they did that. Results from Figure 5.20 show significant differences between Obama and the two other cases when we look at how often the references to private and family lives specifically were present in examined Facebook posts.

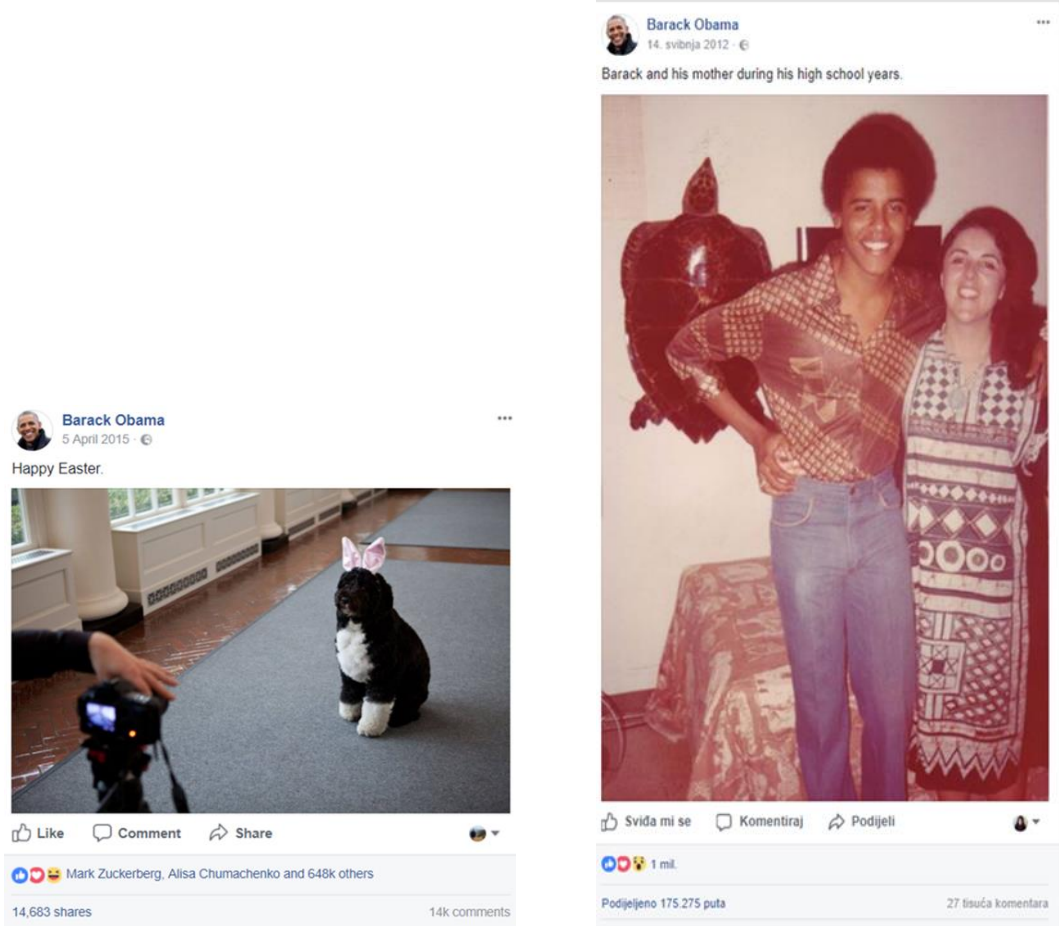
Figure 5. 20: Private and family life of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in Facebook posts (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

The findings revealed that references to Barack Obama’s private life were present in less than 5% of all of the examined posts, while references to his family life were present in more than 6% (Figure 5.20). Posts that contained references to his private life mostly referred to private characteristics of his personae, such as that he is left-handed or that he is a football fan. Posts with references to the family life referred to his family members, primarily his wife Michelle and his daughters, to his late mother, but also to his family dogs Bo and Sunny, which he explicitly presents as family members in his posts. It is interesting to note that Bo and Sunny were often alone in the photos (see example of the post in Figure 5.21) which in some way indicates that it was the strategy to show the dogs instead of other family members. Bo and Sunny most certainly did their part in privatising communication on Facebook. Posts in which they were present always had a great number of reactions.

Figure 5. 21: Obama’s family members in the photos



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

Obama is, of course, not the first President to bring dogs to the White House. White House dogs seem to be a very efficient weapon with which to gain media attention and citizens' reactions. We all know the famous "Fala speech" given by the former US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1944. The speech was named after Roosevelts' loving dog, Fala. In the speech he defends Fala from Republicans, who had falsely accused the President in office of spending tax-payers' money on sending a US Navy destroyer to pick up Fala in Alaska, where he was unintentionally left during the President's visit. The speech was very strong and ironic towards Republicans, and some analysts even say that that speech helped Roosevelt to win the elections (Glass, 2016, September 23). Eight years later, Nixon gave a speech named after his dog, Checkers (ibid). In the speech, he trivialised the accusations coming from Democrats about his campaign funding by saying that he also got Checkers as a campaigning gift and that he and his family were going to keep him. Nixon said he was happy to mention the anecdote with Checkers because, in that way, he paid back the Democrats for the Fala speech. Nixon also sometimes appeared with his family in a private setting (Figure 5.22). Obama did not give a speech about Bo or Sunny, but his dogs certainly had an active role in building Obama's family image. The fact that they got the first dog in 2008, and the second dog arrived in 2013 also supports this hypothesis.

Figure 5. 22: Nixon's dog Checkers and his family



Source: Today (2013, August 20).

This is especially seen in the series of photos from his early life, which were posted in 2012. In these photos, Obama appears with his mother Stanley Ann Dunham (see Figure 5.21). His mother died of cancer in 1995, and he often said how important she was in his life. For instance, on May 16th and September 5th, a series of nine posts that were dedicated to his private life was published, on September 7th there were several posts relating to OFA supporters, then a series of picture quotes that were issue related. Judging on the number of interactions, this was not a good strategy, because whenever the number of posts published in one day was so high, the number of interactions were lower in number than on the days when one or two posts were posted. This is especially visible from the posts related to his private life, which almost every time, gained a higher number of interactions than average, except in cases when they were all published on one day. In the same period, photos of him and Michelle from the early stages of their relationship were posted, together with the photos of their daughters, Malia and Sasha.

Figure 5. 23: Obama family



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'Barack Obama'.

Furthermore, photos of the Obama family during Obama's presidency show the same closeness between the family members. One of the most liked posts ever was "The new Obama family portrait", posted in 2011 (Figure 5.23). We can see that this is not a classic family portrait, in

which everyone usually stands beside each other, but that in the Obama family portrait they are all very close to each other, Sasha sits on Barack's lap, and they all hold each other's hands. This could be characterised as a new level of privatisation, where the family members are in physical contact all the time. This is especially significant for Michelle and Barack's relationship and the presentation of their relationship on social media. We all remember one of the most famous photos on the internet ever, which is the photo of Barack and Michelle's hug after he had won the second term, followed by the inspiring words: "Four more years" (Figure 5.24). This photo, and these words, were originally tweeted on Obama's Twitter account, and at the time it shattered even Justin Bieber's record with its number of retweets. The same message was posted on Facebook and was the most liked post on Obama's official fan page.

Using the same photo in a different context was not rare, for instance, Obama's family portrait was later chosen on several occasions for congratulations on the 4th of July and similar occasions. What is surprising, and what shows how adept Obama's social media team was, is the fact that even the photo from the already discussed Tweet, "Four more years", was not even taken on the night of the victory, but months earlier in Iowa on August 15th. That was the first campaign event that Michelle attended, and this photo is a moment when the two of them met after they had not seen each other for days. I believe that any other official Tweet and Facebook post, with any other photo announcing Obama's second election victory, would also be very popular. Yet the choice of this exact photo, and not some from the election night, was certainly wisely made. Grbeša stresses the role of the first lady in the privatisation of politics, explaining that the position by itself demands the exposure of the wife (2008, p. 59). However, what is different in Barack and Michelle Obama's appearances from those of previous White House couples in the media, and on social media, is the tenderness that they often shared. I see this closeness and tenderness between the first lady and the President as a new level of privatisation of the political persona. Again, they are not the first couple in politics who appeared to be so close, but they had certainly introduced a new type of privatisation. Supporting evidence for this can be found on Obama's current official web page, on which you can contact Barack and Michelle's office, and make different sorts of agreements and invite them to give speeches at events or something else. On the cover photo, Obama and Michelle are photographed from the back while they hug, and the message written across the page is very emotional, and even pathetic, saying: "We love you back" (Obama's current official web page <https://barackobama.com/>).

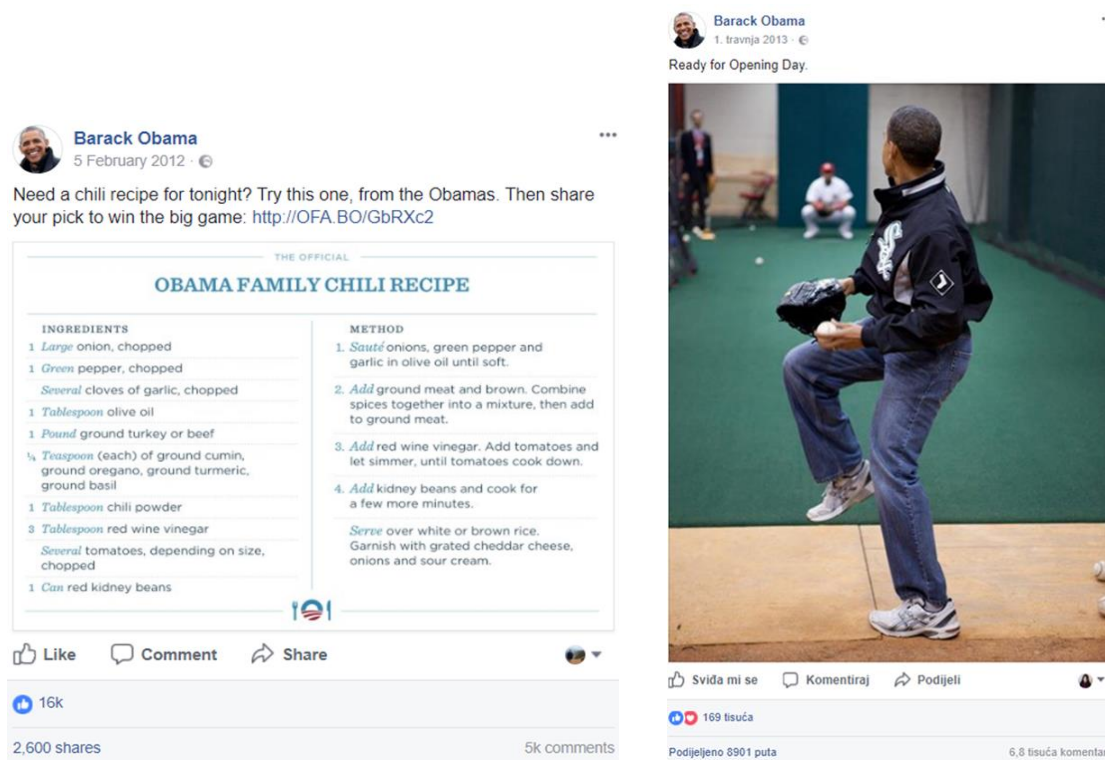
Figure 5. 24: Obama’s “Four more years photo” and original photo



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

Furthermore, we can see parts of his private life and other segments, as is demonstrated in Figure 5.25, with the Obama family recipe for chili, which reveals how his family prepares and likes chili. Although he mentions family in this example, the focus is not directly on the members of his family, but on the recipe that they like. Another thing that his team was pointing to is the fact that he is left-handed. Even by congratulating “left-handers’ day” and by placing his hands in focus while he is signing some documents, or playing baseball, they wanted to stress that part of his private persona as something special about him. The fact that he plays baseball and basketball, typical American games, shows that he wanted to present himself as an average American citizen. It is also interesting that, in the presented photos, he plays in old sneakers, a grey and old T-shirt, and old trousers or a tracksuit, looking even more like a typical American, and “one of us” (Figure 5.25). That technique is easily recognisable as another aspect of the already discussed concept of humanisation, meaning that a politician is doing certain things to appear to be an ordinary citizen. Politicians use this technique because it is believed that citizens will vote for someone with whom they can identify, for someone who looks like them and who does the same things they do, because he certainly understands their problems and will do everything to help them (Holtz-Bacha, 2004). He will work for them because he is like them.

Figure 5. 25: Obama’s private life: Family recipe and sports



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

David Cameron rarely exposed elements from his private and family life on his Facebook fan page. References to his private life were present in less than 1% of all of the examined posts while references to his family life specifically were present in less than 2% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.20). Also, his family members were present in less than 2% of all posts which contained photos. In Cameron’s case, family members almost exclusively referred to his wife Samantha, who did not appear often, but the impression about their close relationship was still very strong. Moreover, from the Facebook posts, we can conclude that his relationship with his wife Samantha has been very important to him. The following posts demonstrate best how he used cues from his private life to talk about small businesses in the UK. He did not use this strategy very often, but he obviously knew that giving bits of his private life to the public could help in promoting issues. These posts did have issues as their overall focus, but they were also in both cases coded for the presence of family life, and the presence of private life in the first post because he revealed that he knows how to cook. It is also interesting to note that these posts were published a year apart, the first in December 2013, and the second in December 2014, and, as we can see, the strategy remained absolutely the same. In comparison with two other cases, it appears that Cameron most often used elements of family life to promote issues

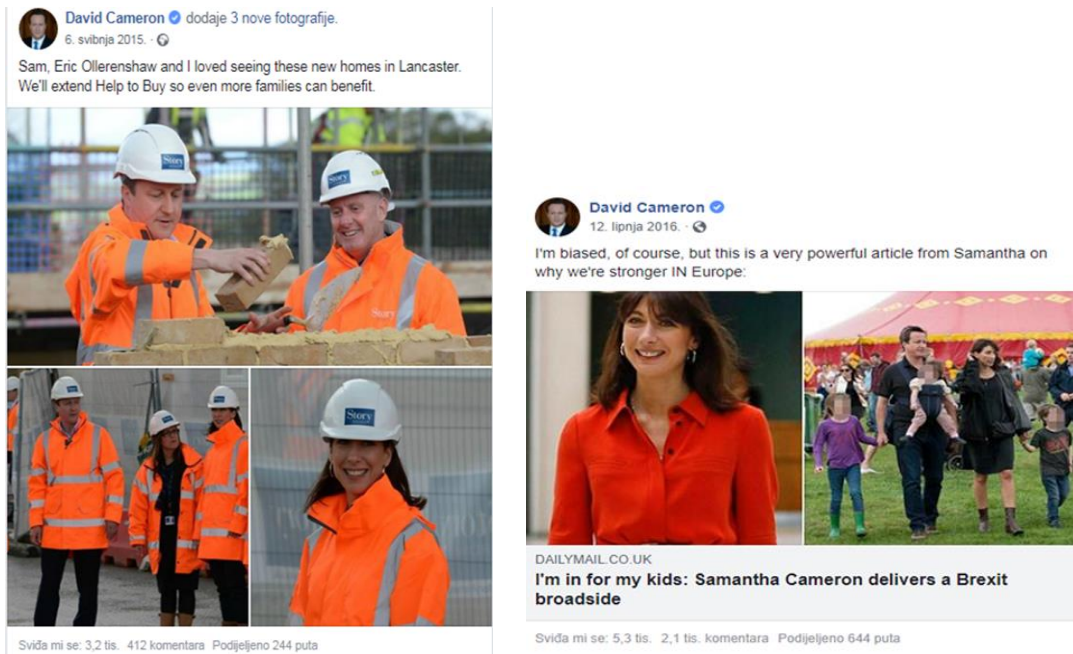
like in the examples from Figure 5.26 and 5.27. This brings us to the conclusion that David Cameron used privatisation as a strategy to promote the policies of his government.

Figure 5. 26: David Cameron - infiltration of private life in political issues



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'David Cameron'.

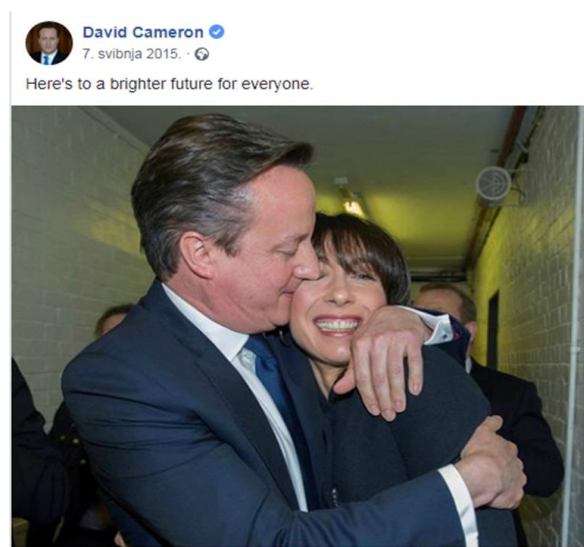
Figure 5. 27: Cameron's wife Samantha and issues



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'David Cameron'.

We can see that Cameron’s wife was not there only to fulfil ceremonial duties. On the contrary, as demonstrated in a previous example, she was someone whose opinion he appreciated greatly, someone to be trusted (see example of the post in Figure 5.27 in which he promotes Samantha’s article in dailymail.co.uk). The truth is that they were not expressing intimacy and closeness, like the Obamas, but they still managed to present their marriage as being full of love and appreciation. In the following example (Figure 5.28) we see one of the rare examples when Cameron “crossed the line” and showed an intimate hug with Samantha, in “Obama’s style”.

Figure 5. 28: Cameron and Samantha in an intimate moment



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘David Cameron’.

Ivo Josipović likewise did not expose his family often (in less than 1% of all of the examined posts), but he did use references to other aspects of his private life (in more than 6% of all of the examined posts) (see results in Figure 5.15). For instance, he was eager to reveal how much he loves music, which school and college he attended (Figure 5.29, second post). Also, he was proud that he plays the piano and that he is a composer. The former Croatian President never shared photos of his daughter, while photos of his wife were very rare. Not only that, but his wife was not present in the posts, and even when she was in the photos she was there in a ceremonial role, always in the presence of other politicians and officials. In my sample, they also did not have any photos alone, and the only photograph on which they were in physical contact was a photo from New Year’s Eve, which was posted with text about how important family is to him (Figure 5.29, first example).

Figure 5. 29: Josipović's private life in Facebook posts



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'Ivo Josipović'.

To sum up, the findings show significant differences between the use of private and family lives in examined cases. Although neither of the selected politicians was very eager to reveal the private side of their personae, Obama obviously did it most often. Moreover, Obama most often revealed family moments and intimate moments with members of his family, while in Cameron's and Josipović's case that happened almost never. As already mentioned, Cameron did appear in some occasions with his wife, but that was mostly when she needed to support some of his policies. On the other hand, Josipović only revealed some elements of his private life not directly related to his family life. Again, these differences can be explained with differences in the political culture of each country and also the different personalities of examined politicians.

As we have already discussed in the theoretical part of this thesis, the privatisation of the political persona can be a strategy used by political candidates to gain votes and to get closer to their voters by giving them a piece of their private life, but the privatisation of the political persona is also, very often, media driven. The media are eager to reveal the private side of politicians especially if there is some scandal that will bring them a significant increase in readership. Yet, in most cases, it is difficult to draw the line between these two things, is the privatisation of politics a product of media attention, or is it a strategy of politicians? Social media are overcoming this problem because now we can look at a platform that is controlled

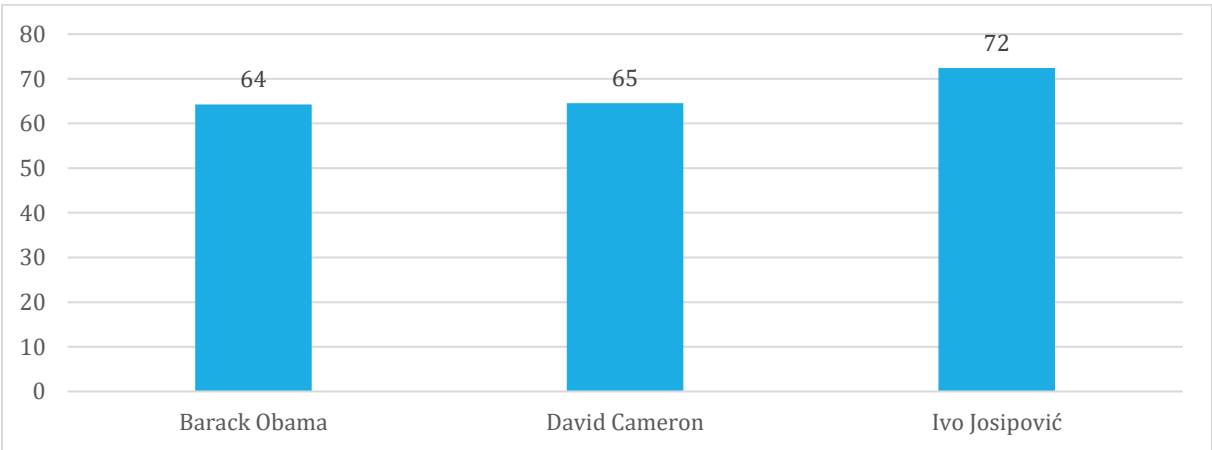
by a politician, and where they publish only what they want to reveal and in the way they want it presented. Previously, this kind of research could have been conducted only on video ads and, later, on web pages. These are only three formats/platforms that are journalistically unmediated, and that are deprived of media representation. In studying the privatisation on the official Facebook fan page, we can clearly see what information from their private lives Obama, Cameron and Josipović wanted to reveal, how often they were doing this, and in what way.

In the next paragraphs, the use of emotional appeals in the posts will be discussed. Although, emotions are integral part of private lives and also of humanisation, it is the intention of this part of the analysis to explore the use of emotional appeals in a more general sense in the examined posts.

Emotionalization on different levels

Analysis of the presence of emotional appeals in the posts of examined politicians gave interesting results. As we can see in the following Figure 5.30 emotional appeals were extensively used in Obama’s, Cameron’s and Josipović’s communication on Facebook. All three politicians used emotions in more than 60% of all examined posts in each case. The use of logical and ethical appeals was also examined.

Figure 5. 30: Presence of emotional appeals in Facebook posts of Obama, Cameron and Josipović (%)



Source: Author’s own calculation.

Social media platforms have often been accused of trivialisation and of bringing too much emotion to the public sphere, just as previously, television was accused of the same things by

Habermas and some other authors (Kellner, 2009). Looking at Figure 5.30, we see that 64.29% of all of the examined posts on Barack Obama's fan page contained emotions. Obama often communicated emotions of hope and enthusiasm, love and care. He rarely communicated any negative emotions, such as fear and anger, and he also rarely used Facebook for attacks on opponents or any other actors. These findings reveal that Obama's communication on Facebook was positive and that he did not use Facebook for attacks and expressing negative emotions. Although the intracoder reliability test that I was doing before coding gave a reliability score of 0.72¹⁰, these results demonstrate the importance of emotional appeals in the posts, with the focus on emotions. It might be said that his PR team had succeeded in putting emotions into everything, and while doing that they used several different tactics. The first is a language that is full of emotional expressions and words, the second is the use of photographs, mostly photos in which he appears with an emotional expression on his face, either smiling and thus expressing emotions of happiness, or with a very cold and strict facial expression, thus demonstrating his anger or unhappiness with something. He was the king of facial expressions. He is one of those individuals that has a really strong face and mimics, possessing this power to either make you laugh or make you feel worried.

Emotions were most often used in the posts with an overall focus on the Private profile (90.95%) and the Political profile (85.84%). Emotions have also been used in 60.87% posts that had issues as the overall focus. Obama's team was good at adding some emotional appeals to issue related posts. In this context, the dominant strategy used was highlighting accomplishments. Bearing in mind that in the examined period Obama was running for his second term in office his use of this strategy is expected. These posts contained emotions because it would be hard to emphasise all the good things that you have done during the term without putting emotions in it. These posts were most often related to different issues. For instance, a lot of emotionalised posts were related to gun violence (Figure 5.31, first example). In this example, we can notice the importance of the photo in the post. While the text of the post is emotional, a much stronger emotion is evoked by Obama's photo in black and white with the dark background and his worried face expression. Also, there were casual posts which had the purpose of cheering you up and presenting Obama as an emotional, fun guy, who is especially loved by the youngest. These highly emotionalized posts were usually those posts in which he appears with children. It is a well-known strategy, and politicians during the campaigns take them in an effort to be

¹⁰ The results of the intracoder test are presented in Appendix 3.

photographed with the children while they are at rallies. However, Obama did that during his presidency years, and not only during election years (see example of such a post in Figure 5.31). The photos were a crucial part of this kind of posts.

Figure 5. 31: Emotional appeals in different shapes



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'Barack Obama'.

However, there are interesting examples which reveal that strong messages are sometimes more important than just an emotional photo. In the following example, we have a comparison between a tweet and a Facebook post in which we can see the use of the same photo. The difference is in the textual part of the message. While on Facebook the photo is followed with words "Good morning" on Twitter the photo is followed with a strong message related to human rights. Although the photo posted on Facebook received a large number of interactions, the photo followed with the issue on Twitter become much more popular. As a matter of fact, in February 2020 it was still amongst the ten most popular tweets ever (Statista, February 2020). It is obvious that without a strong message, the impact is not even close to the impact of the Tweet with the same photo but a different strong message that addresses important issues.

Figure 5. 32: Comparison between Obama’s Tweet and the Facebook post



Source: Twitter account ‘Barack Obama’ and Facebook, Fan Page ‘Barack Obama’.

Logical appeals were present in 52.89% of all examined posts on Obama’s fan page. While coding logical appeals I also had problems in defining what I would code for the presence of logical appeals. Both the theory and previous research clearly explain that logical appeals are present when the evidence for a certain argument is presented. While coding this category, I had certain problems, because sometimes it was difficult to estimate whether something is evidence and argument, or whether it is just bold information. Keeping in mind the format of the Facebook post, we realise that it is hard to integrate logical appeal into it. Yet more than half of all posts have some sort of logical appeal.¹¹ Ethical appeals which refer to some other person than Obama were rarely used on his fan page, what can also be interpreted as a sign of personalisation and focus on his persona, and not someone else’s. When ethical appeals were present in the posts, these usually came in the form of quotes by Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks and other historical figures.

David Cameron also used emotions very often (in more than 64% of all examined cases) in his posts (Figure 5.30). Looking again at the dominant strategies that he frequently used it is noticed that highlighting accomplishments and making promises for the future were among the most used strategies. Again, stressing all the good things you have done while securing the second

¹¹ Similarly, as for coding emotional appeals, the inter-coder and intra-coder reliability test for logical appeal gave results that were lower than expected, but still somewhat higher – 0.75 (see Appendix 3).

term in office and making promises for the future are strategies that are complementary with the use of emotions. Cameron also often posted announcements which were emotional, in the first place because they referred to some unfortunate events, like terrorist attacks (see example in Figure 5.33), expressing condolences to the family members of past officials, victims of floods and similar. He also sometimes used Facebook for attacks on his opponents, the Labour party and he was very emotional about it, calling the Labour party a threat (Figure 5.33). It is interesting to note that the posts in these examples did not contain photos but still were emotional.

Figure 5. 33: Emotional appeals on Cameron’s Facebook fan page



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘David Cameron’

Also, it was already stressed how often Cameron used emotional appeals when communicating issues, for instance when he openly said that he is very angry with the EU, or when his wife Samantha was next to him to support the economy. Further, some of the most popular posts containing emotional appeals from Cameron’s fan page were posted during the campaign in 2015. Photos where he feeds a lamb “while resting from the campaign” became headlines in many newspapers. He, of course, knew that he would be compared with Margaret Thatcher and the famous photo in which she holds a calf (Figure 5.34), knowing that he would get significantly more likes than usual on Facebook and Twitter. That photoshoot, as he well knew, was a central part of his campaign, although he said it was a rest from the campaign and pretended that it was in his private time, as if he is always feeding lambs while resting from work. He was also aware that everyone would say that it was a pathetic and bold strategy to attract voters, but still, the photo of a caring, familiar and simple Prime Minister doing what many families are doing during weekend breaks was a powerful weapon that might bring in the votes.

Figure 5. 34: Cameron and Thatcher holding domestic animals



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘David Cameron’ and Barkham, 2015, April 6.

Logical appeals were often used on Cameron’s Facebook fan page (88% of all of the examined posts on his fan page). Again, having in mind that most of the time he communicated about the issues and especially about the economy and Brexit, the finding is expected. Ethical appeals were present in less than 3% of all of the examined posts, which tells us that other actors almost never appeared in his posts and that communication was focused on him.

Ivo Josipović had emotional appeals in more than 70% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.30). Besides the strategy highlighting accomplishments which was coloured by emotions, Josipović most often relied on ordinary citizens. That was his most often used strategy and he put much effort into sending positive emotions by appearing among citizens, shaking their hands, talking to them, and doing all that with a big smile. Again, recalling that his Facebook fan page was extensively used for campaigning for the second term and motivating citizens to join him in that context, the presence of emotional appeals is not surprising. Josipović used his Facebook frequently to congratulate different holidays to citizens who celebrate. For instance, in the following example (Figure 5.35, first post) he is congratulating Easter to all believers. Related to that is another example in which he is using emotional but also ethical appeals by

quoting Pope Francis (Figure 5.35, second post). Ethical appeals were present in 11% of all of the examined posts, and these appeals often referred to members of the catholic church in Croatia which complements the previous finding that communicating about religion was important for him because he is agnostic himself, while the dominant religion in Croatia is Christian catholic.

Figure 5. 35: Emotional and ethical appeals on Josipović’s Facebook fan page



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Ivo Josipović’

Also, emotions were often integrated into posts in which he was advocating change related to the constitutional reform he was proposing. Logical appeals mostly related with the mentioned issue were present in 30,40% of all of the examined posts.

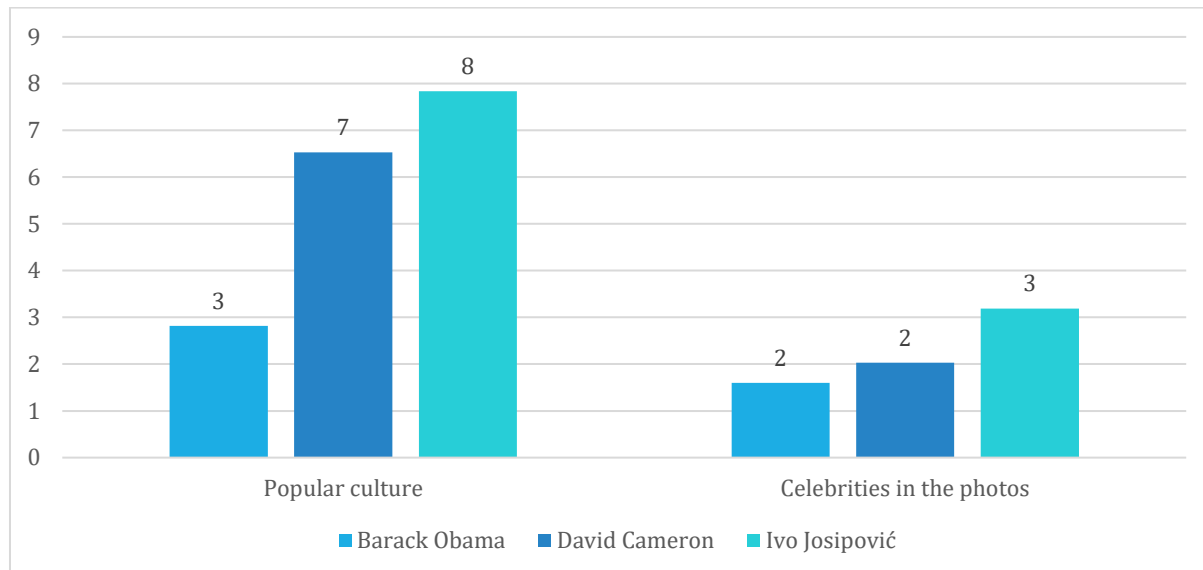
It is evident from these results that emotionalization was overwhelmingly used in all three examined cases. Although the private lives of politicians were not often in the focus, it appears that they found other ways to appear accessible to citizens, primarily through emotional appeals in their communication.

In the following section, the use of popular culture in Facebook posts of examined politicians is discussed.

5.3 Popularisation and celebrity endorsement on the Facebook of Obama, Cameron and Josipović

When studying the personalisation of political communication and the popularisation of politics, in the wider sense, one has to study elements of popular culture in politics. The idea is that incorporating elements of popular culture into politics can bring politics closer to the people. For that reason, I wanted to examine how often, and in what form, Obama's social media team used elements from popular culture to spread messages and engage citizens. One question in my code sheet asked if there were any reference to popular culture in the post, the second was are there any celebrities in the photos. In this context, it was also examined how often celebrity endorsement was used as a dominant strategy. Also, when looking at different settings in which the examined politicians appeared, it was asked how often they appeared with celebrities. In the case of Barack Obama, only 2.82% of posts contained some reference to popular culture (Figure 5.36) while celebrities appeared in only 1,6% of all examined posts.

Figure 5. 36: References to popular culture and celebrities in the photos on Facebook of Obama, Cameron and Josipović (%)



Source: Author's own calculation.

These findings suggest that popular culture was not used as a planned strategy on Obama's official Facebook fan page. Yet it is very interesting to note that the posts which contained references to popular culture were, in many cases, issue-related, which tells us his team used celebrities for two main purposes: to promote certain issues and to build his image. The

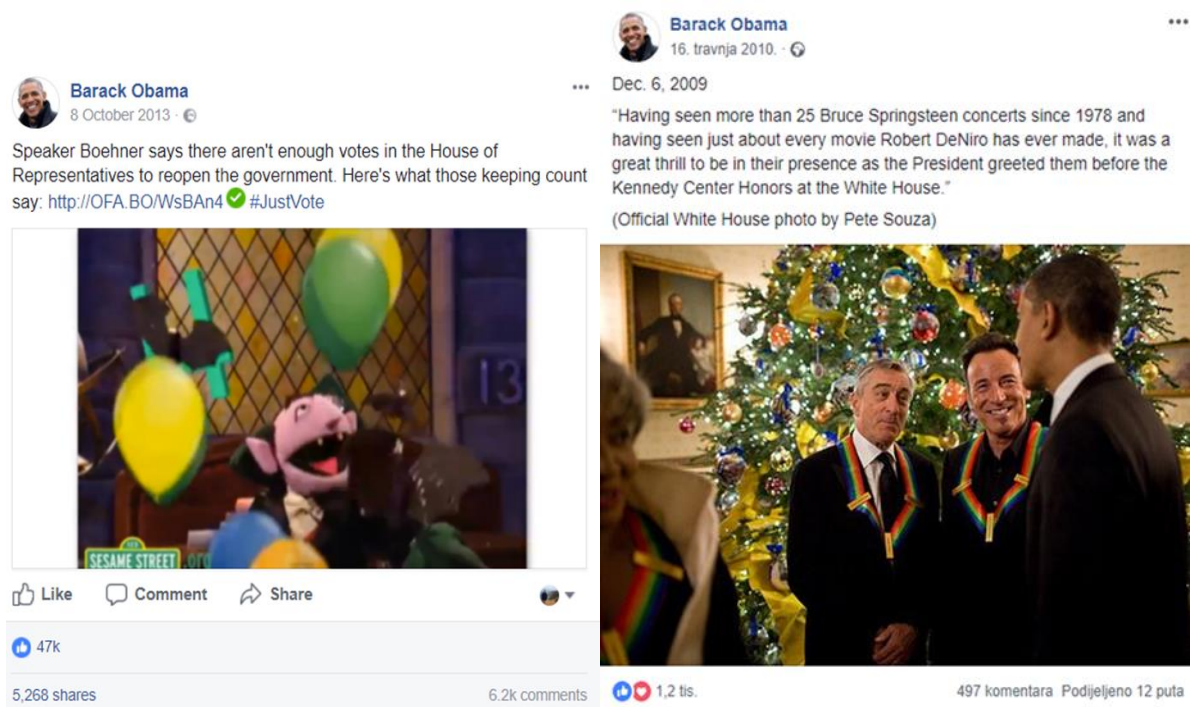
following example presented in Figure 5.37 shows a clip from the popular *Sesame Street*, in which a well-known character, from one of the longest running and globally popular humorous children's series, the vampire Count von Count, asks members of the House of Representatives to reopen the government. Combining popular culture, parody and humour to address serious questions is a tactic that was not used that often, as I had expected, although Facebook seems to be an ideal platform for that kind of communication.

In the second example (also Figure 5.37), Obama appears in a photo with Bruce Springsteen and Robert De Niro in the White House. And not just that; in the textual part of the status, Obama reveals information from his private life, how many of Springsteen's concerts he saw and when he was at his first concert. Bearing in mind that Bruce Springsteen is one of the greatest American singers, musicians and songwriters ever, that he always sings about ordinary people, hard workers and the underprivileged, that he is a family man living far from any scandals, certainly means that Obama, as his huge fan, will somehow benefit from that notion. In the first place, it will probably bring him votes and the sympathy of numerous of Springsteen's fans from all around the US. Appearing with Robert De Niro, one of the biggest movie stars ever, and underlining that he watched all of De Niro's movies, will possibly sprinkle him with De Niro's popularity. As Street claims, politicians "associate themselves with popular culture and its icons, in the hope that some of the popularity will rub off" (1997, p. 48). In this context, in the theoretical chapter, we have discussed how important it is for politicians "to communicate according to the culture of the time" (Van Zoonen, 2005).

We all know very well how many celebrities supported Obama, from Beyoncé and Jay-Z to Bruce Springsteen and Oprah Winfrey, and yet celebrity endorsement was almost never used as a strategy. This is a most surprising result since I was assuming that elements of popular culture would be widely present on social media. On the contrary, real celebrities, who are globally famous, did not appear on his Facebook fan page. It can only be guessed that it was because these celebrities were a part of the campaign for the traditional media. One celebrity who did appear was the country singer and guitarist, James Taylor. However, he appeared only on the posters promoting a trip to Alaska, with the goal of raising awareness about global warming, which means his appearance was used to promote environmental issues, and not Obama himself. These posts also had little interaction. This may be partly because they were repeated numerous times with the same photo, or it may be that James Taylor is not someone

who would attract Facebook users. As is seen from the Figure 5.8 showing dominant strategies, celebrities inviting citizens to vote for Obama, or to support his policies, were indeed very rare.

Figure 5. 37: References to popular culture in Obama’s posts



Source: Facebook, Fan Page 'Barack Obama'.

We also know that Obama was a fan of many popular tv series like *Game of Thrones* and *House of Cards*. Barack Obama almost never used his official Facebook fan pages to appear with celebrities, or to reveal what music or what TV shows he likes. Although it is well-known that Obama is a fan of the HBO series *House of Cards* and *Game of Thrones*, that was not communicated on his Facebook fan page, although, it was communicated on Twitter, as we can see from the following examples presented in Figure 5.38. In the first example, he refers to a new episode of *House of Cards* and, in the second example, he appears in a sketch with the famous stand-up comedian, Jerry Seinfeld. It was also widely discussed on Twitter, and in the mainstream media, whether Obama would have the privilege of being the only man in the world who would find out in advance how the sixth season of *Game of Thrones* was going to end, if one of the main characters in the series, Jon Snow, is really dead, or not (Tassi, 2016, April 23).

Figure 5. 38: Obama’s references to popular culture on the Twitter



Source: Twitter accounts ‘White House Archived’ and ‘Barack Obama’.

Keeping these examples in mind and remembering how many celebrities supported Obama in his campaigns, I was expecting that his Facebook fan page, where he had dozens of millions of fans, would be overfull with elements of popular culture. However, this was not the case, and that was indeed an unexpected finding. This could mean that popular culture cues have been a strategy reserved for the traditional media. One possible reason is that the strategy was to keep Facebook communication focused on important issues. Obama’s Facebook fan page was, from one point of view, used to set the agenda on topics which were not sufficiently represented in the traditional media. It is a paradox, and, of course, a superficial explanation, but it appears that Facebook was used for important questions, while the traditional media serve “for fun”. Obama was often framed in the traditional media as a guy who always smiles, who is cool and supported by dozens of celebrities, and with an ideal family. While we also get these impressions on social media, at the same time, we get a lot of Obama’s seriousness. If we recall the result of the analysis, which showed that out of all the examined photos in which he appears, he smiles in only half of them, it is clear that his team was working very hard on finding the right balance between the serious and the cool Obama. It appears that traditional media must choose for themselves only “fun” stories that will bring them audiences, while on social media you can afford to communicate “boring” themes. Celebrity endorsement as discussed earlier as well as his appearances with celebrities were almost never used on his Facebook fan page.

David Cameron used references to popular culture more often on his Facebook fan page (in 6,53% of the examined posts), but still, celebrities appeared very rarely (in 2% of the examined

posts) (Figure 5.36). As we can see from the following example when celebrities appeared, it was to promote certain issues and not to stand behind Cameron himself and invite citizens to vote for him. Moreover, in this particular case, they actually appeared on guardian.com website inviting citizens to vote “remain” in the Brexit referendum, and Cameron only shared that article (see Figure 5.39, second post). He was very eager to support UK sports teams in different competitions, like the Olympics, the Davis Cup, Football championships, hockey matches (also Figure 5.39). He was usually cheering for sports with short messages, mostly without photos. Furthermore, an unexpected post was the photo of him and Samantha at the *Game of Thrones* exhibition, where, in the post, we discovered that he is a big fan of the famous HBO series *GoT*. This kind of presence of elements of popular culture in the posts was very rare, just as in the case of Barack Obama. Additionally, Cameron sometimes shared photos of his guest appearances in the media.

Figure 5. 39: References to popular culture and issues in Cameron’s case



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘David Cameron’.

Josipović used elements of popular culture in almost 8% of all of the examined posts (Figure 5.36), which is significantly more often than Obama and Cameron. Since he is a composer and

piano player, he was giving musical recommendations to his Facebook followers who congratulated his birthday, he would also thank them for birthday wishes, or just wish them a good day with some popular song. Besides the popular music recommendations and posting, for instance, about a chance encounter with the famous Croatian singer Gibonni (Figure 5.40), he was also congratulating and wishing luck to Croatian national sports teams in football, volleyball, the Davis cup team, and individual players. Since sport is very important in Croatia, it is not surprising that he was trying to gain votes by using the popularity of sports. Yet, celebrities were rarely present in photos on his Facebook fan page, in only 3% of examined posts (Figure 5.36). Also, celebrity endorsement was rarely used as a dominant strategy and he appeared with celebrities in just a few occasions (in 1% of all examined posts in which Josipović was present in the photos).

Figure 5. 40: Josipović’s reference to popular culture



Source: Facebook, Fan Page ‘Ivo Josipović’.

It is evident from the presented findings that popular culture was rarely used on examined Facebook fan pages. This finding is most unexpected because it was assumed that selected politicians will more often try to connect and get closer to citizens by referring to different parts of popular culture. To summarise, the findings of the previous two subchapters which were set to answer the second research question revealed that private cues were used to some extent on Facebook pages of examined politicians. More precisely it is revealed that private lives and specific references to family lives were rarely used while some other forms of privatisation, like humanisation and emotionalization, were extensively used on Facebook. References to popular

culture were differently used in selected cases, but in all three cases, popular culture traits were not often used.

In the following subchapter results of the OLS regression analysis are presented.

5.4 Likes, comments and shares on the Facebook fan pages of Obama, Cameron and Josipović

This part of the research investigates one of the main characteristics of social media - interactivity. Interactivity is the element that makes the biggest difference between traditional media and social media. As already discussed, there are different ways of how citizens can engage on Facebook and interact: by liking (and using other emoticons), sharing, following, commenting, posting, inviting, organising events. In this study, the focus is on three of the most commonly used options for interaction on Facebook: likes, comments and shares. Drawing on the number of likes, comments and shares for every single post published on Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook fan page and the results of content analysis, different regression models were designed to answer the third research question: Which personalisation traits communicated on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook encouraged or discouraged users' engagement? This part of the research is divided into four parts. The first part deals specifically with Obama's case, the second part is about interactions on Cameron's page, the third on Josipović's fan page, while the fourth part presents ten posts which had the highest numbers of interactions for each politician in order to see what was in the main focus of these posts and how it corresponds to the results of regression analysis.

Barack Obama and citizens' interactions

A large number of likes, comments and shares generated on Obama's Facebook fan page, together with the biggest sample of content analysed posts, provided valuable data for the regression analysis. The goal of OLS regression models was to examine which variables have explanatory power to predict the number of likes, comments and shares and whether their contribution is statistically significant or not. The dependent variables in these models measured the number of interactions, while specific indicators of political, private and popular in the examined posts were selected for independent variables (for more details on regression models see section 4.6.2). Table 5.1 presents the results of the three regression model for Obama's post, showing which variables had a positive, negative or no effect on the different types of

interactions (likes, comments, shares). In the regression models for Obama presented in Table 5.1, values from the category Overall focus and Issues were analysed. Issues related to the Economy, the Environment, Minority rights and Health policy were included in the regression model. The results show that only issues related to Minority and women's rights are significant in predicting the number of shares, comments and likes.

The next variable that was observed in order to explain if it has explanatory power to predict the number of interactions was Call for action. Early optimistic views about the role of the internet in politics were predicting that citizens would engage more because now they have platforms that are overcoming space and time constraints. It was believed that citizens would engage more if politicians invited them to participate on platforms through which they could communicate directly as equals. For these reasons, I wanted to explore citizens' online engagement in situations when they are invited to action. The results of the OLS regression show that posts coded in the category Call for action did not have any positive effect on the number of likes and shares. On the contrary, the number of shares and likes was even lower when posts contained some kind of invitation for on-line or offline action. The results are different when the number of comments for posts in which citizens are invited to an activity are observed. They show that the number of comments is higher when a post contains a call for action. I believe there is plausible that those citizens who are "already engaged" (see Norris, 2001) react to the posts calling for action. This means that those who are already sympathisers, supporters, activists and members of the OFA network, and who themselves were often initiators of these "Calls for action" are more willing to comment and engage in this way. This argument also explains why the number of likes and shares are sometimes even smaller than average, showing that likes are more for the "masses", while comments are a means of expression for those who are more engaged. However, this finding does not support the results of the already mentioned article, in which the author finds that "Obama's supporters gave more likes to posts about donations and voting while Romney's supporters gave more likes to posts that asked them to share information with their connections on the network" (Bronstein, 2013, p. 187). Yet, since this study was conducted only during the time of elections whereas the sample in this PhD thesis covers a period of almost nine years, that is not surprising. Namely, it is expected that citizens will be more responsive to calls for action during election campaigns.

Table 5. 1: Barack Obama: OLS regression results

	SHARES		COMMENTS		LIKES		Exp. effect *
	B/se	t	B/se	t	B/se	t	
(Constant)	-0.209 (0.273)	-0.765	-0.738* (0.292)	-2.526	-0.378 (0.290)	-1.303	
<i>Political content</i>							
Economy issue	0.072 (0.079)	0.905	0.125 (0.085)	1.479	0.054 (0.084)	0.643	-
Environment issue	0.057 (0.087)	0.662	-0.021 (0.093)	-0.231	0.075 (0.092)	0.817	-
Minorities rights issue	0.310** (0.086)	3.591	0.268** (0.092)	2.900	0.182* (0.092)	1.989	/
Health issue	0.028 (0.086)	0.325	0.036 (0.092)	0.394	0.038 (0.092)	0.413	/
Controversies	0.041 (0.088)	0.463	0.031 (0.094)	0.333	-0.040 (0.094)	-0.423	-
Campaigning	0.021 (0.011)	1.829	0.005 (0.012)	0.417	0.022 (0.012)	1.772	+
Call for action	-0.022 (0.039)	-0.572	0.148** (0.042)	3.544	-0.074 (0.041)	-1.787	+
<i>Personalisation/visibility</i>							
Political profile in focus	0.336** (0.107)	3.153	0.154 (0.114)	1.353	0.183 (0.113)	1.614	+
Leader in the photo	0.103* (0.042)	2.441	0.245** (0.045)	5.462	0.154** (0.045)	3.443	+
Other politicians in the photo	-0.073 (0.055)	-1.336	-0.117* (0.059)	-1.994	-0.059 (0.058)	-1.017	-
Interest groups in the photo	-0.033 (0.094)	-0.355	-0.057 (0.101)	-0.570	-0.039 (0.100)	-0.390	-
<i>Privatisation/Humanisation</i>							
Private profile in focus	0.051 (0.084)	0.614	0.544** (0.090)	6.075	0.538** (0.089)	6.050	+
Family members in the photo	0.329** (0.072)	4.565	0.565** (0.077)	7.331	0.664** (0.076)	8.685	+
Ordinary citizen in the photo	0.175** (0.042)	-4.163	-0.218** (0.045)	-4.842	0.175** (0.045)	-3.914	+
<i>Emotionalization</i>							
Emotional appeals	0.166** (0.041)	4.052	0.249** (0.044)	5.687	0.261** (0.043)	6.025	+
<i>Popular culture</i>							
Pop culture + celebrities	-0.192 (0.140)	-1.377	-0.150 (0.149)	-1.007	-0.156 (0.148)	-1.054	+
<i>Technical elements</i>							
Graphs	0.164 (0.092)	1.776	0.188 (0.099)	1.905	0.085 (0.098)	0.863	-
R ²	0.044		0.136		0.138		
N	2467		2467		2466		

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

Source: Author's own calculation.

* Sign of the expected statistical effect: positive (+), negative (-), no effect (/).

Furthermore, the presence of other politicians, interest groups and graphs, or values which can also be associated with political content in the posts, mostly did not serve as predictors of the number of interactions, or even had a negative effect on interactions. For instance, the appearance of other politicians in the photo had a negative effect on the number of comments on these posts.

When it comes to variables which reveal the different dimensions of privatisation of politics defined by Holtz-Bacha (2004) such as humanisation, striving for celebrity status, exposing private and family life, or emotionalization, it is revealed that variables which were used to operationalise these dimensions had different effects on numbers of likes, comments and shares. For instance, humanisation is here operationalised using the variable Presence of ordinary people in the photos. Surprisingly, it is discovered that ordinary people in the photos had a significantly negative effect on numbers of likes, comments and shares. In other words, the results show that posts which contained photos with ordinary people attracted fewer shares, comments and likes than the posts without their presence in the photo. This is an interesting finding because it was expected that citizens would be motivated and encouraged to engage when they saw other ordinary people who are like them and who participated in different actions that supported Obama and his policies.

Another surprising finding was that the references to popular culture and appearance of celebrities in the photos in the observed posts did not have any effect on citizens' interactions. Possible explanations for rare appearance of celebrities and popular culture related traits in the Facebook posts of Barack Obama were already discussed (see section 5.3). Such explanations could answer the question why the interactions on these posts were low. Possibly the most important reason is that celebrities from the so called "Hollywood A list" appeared very rarely as did references to the most popular TV shows, series and movies. When celebrities did appear, it was most often related to some issues or campaigning. For instance, the singer James Taylor appeared in the photos in posts which called for donations for the OFA organisation. Obviously, that kind of posts did not attract many interactions.

The analysis showed that variables related to the personal profile (private and political) may work to encourage citizens to like, comment and share. Posts which had Private profile in the overall focus generated higher numbers of comments and likes, while Private profile in the

posts did not have an effect on sharing of the posts. Interestingly, posts with the political profile were more often shared than posts which did not have the political profile in the overall focus. This means that citizens mostly share posts which contain some political message, something that they can support, or with which they can disagree. Also, to encourage someone to share a certain post, the post should contain content that will enable them to demonstrate to their peers whether they are on the same page with a certain idea or not. As expected, the presence of family members in the photos was a strong predictor of a higher number of shares, comments and likes. The evidence goes in line with other studies which find that cues from private lives of politicians can encourage a greater number of people to online engagement (Bene, 2017; Bronstein, 2013; Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015; Kruikemeier et al., 2016). Similarly, when it comes to emotional appeals in the posts, we see the same trend, which shows that the presence of emotional appeals in the posts is a significant predictor of higher numbers of citizens' interactions.

To sum up, the results of the regression models for Obama show that following values had a positive effect on the number of interactions: minority rights, private and political profile, the presence of Obama in the photos, the appearance of family members in the posts, the presence of emotional appeals in the posts, while the presence of ordinary citizens appeared as a strong predictor of lower numbers of likes, comments and shares. Yet, bearing in mind the problems with the IR test with the variable emotional appeals, these results should be treated with due caution and serve as a starting point for further research and investigation.

David Cameron and citizens' interactions

In the second part of the regression analysis, regression models were run on data gathered from David Cameron's fan page. In Cameron's case, three specific issues were included in the model, based on the total number of posts in which they appeared and their statistical contribution in explaining the variance on the dependent variables (likes, comments, shares). These issues were the Economy, Security and Brexit. As we can see in Table 5.2, only posts which had Brexit as the overall focus were predictors of higher numbers of interactions. The regression coefficients (B) show that the issue of Brexit triggered a statistically higher number of likes, comments and shares. These results are telling as they suggest how important the question of Brexit was, and how engaged people were when this topic was the focus of posts. Interestingly, posts related to economic questions, that were most often represented, had a negative effect on the number of interactions. That might mean that citizens were fed up with Cameron's insistence on economic

issues, or that they were not interested in that issue so much. Also, this result could be a consequence of Cameron predominantly using the strategy of ‘highlighting accomplishments’ when communicating economic issues. Citizens obviously did not appreciate the fact that Cameron used Facebook mainly to promote his accomplishments related to the economy. Security-related issues appeared to be a strong predictor of higher numbers of comments. In Cameron’s case, Security issues were mostly related to the deadly terrorist attacks which were unfortunately shaking Europe from 2014 to 2016, but also to threats and consequences of big floods across the the UK that usually happen in winter months. These focusing events might have impacted the greater number of comments, in which citizens possibly wanted to express condolences, anger and fear, but also lift the spirits in hard times.

Further, the presence of other politicians in photos or campaigning in the posts did not have any significant impact on numbers of interactions. Posts which contained a Call for action had a statistically significant negative effect on the numbers of likes and comments.

Additionally, the presence of celebrities and ordinary people in photos also appeared to be a predictor of a lower number of shares, comments and likes. The p-values show a statistically significant negative effect on the number of interactions. As in Obama’s case, this finding is unexpected. The technique of humanisation exercised through the appearance of ordinary people in the photos obviously did not produce reactions among other ordinary people who liked, commented and shared some other posts. Another surprising finding is the lower number of interactions on posts in which celebrities appeared in the photos. The reason behind this finding could be the fact that celebrities on Cameron’s Facebook fan page usually appeared in relation to some issues, most often to Brexit. Also, their appearance was usually not some original content created for Cameron’s fan page, but mostly just linking articles taken from the mainstream media. Yet, the use of references to popular culture had a significantly positive effect on the number of likes. References to popular culture are another technique often used to bring politicians and ordinary people closer, with the idea suggesting that citizens will have a feeling of connection with politicians if they listen to the same music, watch the same TV shows, like the same movie stars etc.

Posts which contained photos, in general, had more interactions than posts without the photos. We recall that Cameron often used his fan page as though it was a Twitter account, and citizens

Table 5. 2: David Cameron: OLS regression results

	SHARES		COMMENTS		LIKES		Exp. effect *
	B/se	t	B/se	t	B/se	t	
Constant	-0.030 (0.353)	-0.850	0.620 (0.356)	1.743	-0.378 (0.347)	-1.088	
<i>Political content</i>							
Economy issue	-0.161* (0.067)	-2.400	-0.102 (0.066)	-1.544	-0.225** (0.065)	-3.481	-
Security issue	0.047 (0.098)	0.473	0.470** (0.097)	4.832	-0.043 (0.095)	-0.456	-
Brexit issue	0.321** (0.109)	2.952	0.541** (0.107)	5.041	0.603** (0.105)	5.765	-
Campaigning in focus	-0.097 (0.116)	-0.834	0.004 (0.114)	0.032	-0.061 (0.112)	-0.545	+
Call for action	0.115 (0.073)	1.597	-0.212** (0.072)	-2.955	-0.172* (0.070)	-2.457	+
<i>Personalisation/visibility</i>							
Other politicians in the photo	-0.080 (0.081)	-0.983	-0.096 (0.080)	-1.192	-0.025 (0.078)	-0.318	-
<i>Privatisation/Humanisation</i>							
Private life in focus	-0.040 (0.293)	-0.137	-0.219 (0.290)	-0.757	0.138 (0.282)	0.488	+
Family members in the photo	0.492** (0.176)	2.799	0.622** (0.174)	3.578	0.827** (0.169)	4.886	+
Ordinary citizen in the photo	-0.368** (0.075)	-4.938	-0.265** (0.074)	-3.601	-0.387** (0.072)	-5.390	+
<i>Emotionalization</i>							
Emotional appeals	0.121* (0.060)	2.011	-0.103 (0.059)	-1.732	0.173** (0.058)	2.982	+
<i>Popular culture</i>							
Celebrity in the photo	-0.340* (0.170)	-1.995	-0.399* (0.168)	-2.375	-0.784** (0.164)	-4.781	+
Popular culture	-0.081 (0.122)	-0.665	0.091 (0.120)	0.756	0.348** (0.118)	2.947	+
<i>Technical elements</i>							
Photo	0.319** (0.086)	3.711	0.135 (0.085)	1.597	0.334** (0.083)	4.049	+
R ²	0.042		0.067		0.108		
N	1332		1327		1331		

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

Source: Author's own calculation.

* Sign of the expected statistical effect: positive (+), negative (-), no effect (/).

obviously did not ‘fan’ that. Photos are an important part of Facebook posts and this finding supports the importance of including photos in my analysis. Further, posts which had a photo in which Cameron’s family members were present attracted significantly more interactions than posts in which the family members were not present in the photos. Like in Obama’s case, the presence of family members obviously encourages more citizens to interact. Emotional appeals had a positive effect on citizens’ engagement on some types of interactions. Emotional appeals in posts generated more shares and likes, while emotions did not have any significant effect on the number of comments. Based on this finding it could be said that citizens better responded to emotional content on Obama’s fan page than on Cameron’s page.

To sum up, the findings suggest that in some cases, political (Brexit), private (family members in photos) and popular cues (references to popular culture) communicated in Facebook posts may work to encourage citizens to interact, which results in higher numbers of likes, comments and shares. On the other hand, it was unexpected that, for instance, sometimes some dimensions of privatisation such as humanisation (presence of ordinary people in the photos) and striving for celebrity status (presence of celebrities in the photos) may work to discourage citizens to interact, generating lower numbers of likes, comments and shares.

Ivo Josipović and citizens’ interactions

In the third part of analysis, data obtained from Ivo Josipović’s fan page were analysed. The results of the OLS regressions are presented in Table 5.3.

The results reveal that, in Josipović’s case, political content related to the variable measuring the presence of issues in the overall focus had a positive effect on the number of likes, while issues in posts did not have any effect on the number of comments and shares. Also, a Call for action as well as the appearance of other politicians and interest groups in the photos did not have any significant effect on numbers of likes, comments and shares.

Posts which contained Josipović’s private life as the overall focus had a positive effect on the number of comments and likes. Interestingly, the presence of family members in the photos did not have any significant effect on the numbers of interactions. We showed that Josipović rarely appeared with his wife, and even when that happened, it was for official duties and in ceremonial occasions. He almost never appeared with his wife in some private and more intimate setting, as Obama and Cameron did. However, he revealed some other elements of his

private life, usually related to his education and music preferences, and judging by the results of the regression analysis, citizens were fond of it. Other variables that have some explanatory power when looking at the number of interactions were emotional appeals. Yet, the positive effect is significant only for the numbers of likes. A variable that had a negative effect on the number of interactions, like in Obama's and Cameron's case, was the appearance of ordinary people in the photos.

Table 5. 3: Ivo Josipović: OLS regression results

	SHARES		COMMENTS		LIKES		Exp. effect *
	B/se	t	B/se	t	B/se	t	
Constant	0.162 (0.263)	0.616	0.320 (0.260)	1.233	-0.300 (0.260)	-1.150	
<i>Political content</i>							
Issues in the overall focus	0.068 (0.079)	0.861	0.125 (0.078)	1.608	0.166* (0.078)	2.136	-
Call for action	-0.089 (0.083)	-1.071	0.004 (0.082)	0.053	-0.091 (0.082)	-1.103	+
<i>Personalisation/visibility</i>							
Leader in the photo	-0.376** (0.100)	-3.779	-0.003 (0.098)	-0.034	0.085 (0.099)	0.858	+
Other politicians in the photo	0.069 (0.105)	0.659	-0.010 (0.103)	-0.097	-0.082 (0.104)	-0.796	-
Interest group in the photo	0.146 (0.156)	0.936	-0.036 (0.154)	-0.232	0.007 (0.154)	-0.045	-
<i>Privatisation/Humanisation</i>							
Private life in focus	0.102 (0.158)	0.647	0.372* (0.156)	2.388	0.302* (0.156)	1.934	+
Family members in the photo	0.099 (0.252)	0.395	-0.156 (0.249)	-0.626	-0.146 (0.250)	-0.584	+
Ordinary citizen in the photo	-0.159 (0.088)	-1.809	-0.326** (0.087)	-3.747	-0.356** (0.087)	-4.080	+
<i>Emotionalization</i>							
Emotional appeals	0.069 (0.089)	0.781	0.104 (0.088)	1.182	0.279** (0.088)	3.172	+
<i>Popular culture</i>							
Popular culture cues	-0.286 (0.154)	-1.858	-0.211 (0.152)	-1.386	-0.080 (0.153)	-0.526	+
Celebrity in the photo	0.731** (0.200)	3.648	0.242 (0.198)	1.221	0.603** (0.198)	3.040	+
R ²	0.049		0.071		0.059		
N	739		739		739		

**p<0.01, *p<0.05

Source: Author's own calculation.

* Sign of the expected statistical effect: positive (+), negative (-), no effect (/).

Most liked posts on Facebook fan pages of Obama, Cameron and Josipović

Additionally, in this part of the research, ten posts that had the highest number of interactions for each politician were selected in order to see what was the focus of these posts, what attracted citizens to 'like' and to comment. As already seen in Obama's case, these were posts related to his private profile, seven out of ten. All posts had a photo and Obama was present in most of them. Moreover, family members were also present, Michelle, his daughters, his mother, and his dogs. These photos had the biggest number of interactions. Two posts that had issues, specifically a post about marriage equality, were among the posts that had the largest number of likes, and a post about immigration law was one of the ten posts that had the highest number of comments, but was not among the posts with the biggest number of likes.

The situation is completely different when we look at the posts that had the highest number of likes and comments on Cameron's Facebook fan page. First, and most surprising, is the fact that among ten posts in this category of the most liked and commented upon posts, six of them did not contain a photo. These posts consisted only of a textual part, and they did not contain either a link or a photo. Further, most of them, in their overall focus, had issues or announcements. For instance, the post expressing condolences and shock about the terrorist attacks in Paris and Tunisia in 2015, the post about the UK giving money to the EU, in which he expressed his anger and resolution that he would not pay the bill the EU asked them to pay. Another post that engaged many people was the post in which he shared information about taking military action in Syria. This was probably a controversial issue, and it generated more than 30,000 comments. Here, we can see that posts with negative emotions about unfortunate events and controversial issues attracted numerous interactions and comments. Posts expressing happiness, like the post from election night, in which Cameron hugs and kisses his wife, was among the most 'liked' and commented upon posts. Further, a post without a photo and with only a textual part, that said "Happy New Year", which was posted on January 1st, 2016, gained 46 thousand likes and more than five thousand comments. Well-wishing for the New Year in this way, without any photo, shows that Cameron did indeed use Facebook as if he were posting a message on Twitter. Cameron did not often use elements from popular culture to attract citizens, but his photo with Andy Murray and the Great Britain Davis Cup team, which won the Davis Cup in 2015, as expected, was among the most 'liked' posts. Knowing that Andy Murray is the UK's best tennis player, it does not surprise us that the post has more than 50,000 likes.

Looking at the third examined case, the former Croatian President, Ivo Josipović, we find that the posts with the most interactions were posts of congratulations for Christmas and Easter holidays to everyone who celebrates them. Posts from the campaign posted in December 2014, on a few occasions had the highest number of interactions in the category. In these posts, he was often inviting citizens to attend rallies and concerts that were organised as a part of his campaign. Interestingly, the post that had a significantly higher number of likes than any other post on Josipović's Facebook, was a status without a photo, in which he is congratulating the new Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, on the electoral win and where he acknowledged everyone who was with him during the campaign and the term. Two posts also had his private profile as the focus, once it was on his birthday and, the second time, it was a post in which he expressed gratitude to everyone worried for him because of a medical operation. He explained in the post that the operation was routine and that he would be back at work in a few days. However, he did not explain what it was.

5.5 Discussion

This chapter aims to elaborate on the findings of content analysis and regression analysis. The first part of the discussion will provide an answer to the first research question i.e. what was the intensity and character of personalisation on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović, the second part will answer how private and popular cues were used on selected Facebook fan pages. The third part deals with the findings of regression analysis and provides an answer on what cues communicated in the Facebook posts encouraged or discouraged Facebook users to like, comment and share.

5.5.1 Social media functions: personalisation, politicisation and mobilisation

The findings have revealed that there are differences in intensity and character of personalisation on Facebook between the selected cases, but there are also similarities. Personalisation was investigated relying on the categories overall focus, the category that was built on the differentiation between image and issue, dominant strategies used, type of the post, calls for action and visibility of Obama, Cameron and Josipović in the photos.

Personalisation on Obama's Facebook fan page

Examined posts on the fan page of Barack Obama very often looked like parts of a campaign for some specific issue. That means that Facebook served as a platform for issue campaigning, or permanent campaigning, on several issues. It is more than obvious that everything that was posted on his Facebook had been created in advance. Most of the posts could literally have been published at any time. The content of the post was usually related to the issue but mostly was not, and with the daily politics and happenings that were maybe related to that issue. If one wanted to create a parallel reality to what was happening in the US from Barack Obama's official fan page, that reality would be very different from what was actually going on. Of course, a simplified picture of politics on Facebook might be expected, but the primary problem here is not a simplified reality, but a reality that misses content. It might be that the strategy was to make any post understandable at any moment in time and be completely independent and understandable without knowing the context because this was exactly the case with most of these posts. One could understand them, regardless of whether they were posted in 2011 or 2015, without knowing the context and what was really happening in the US and around the world at that moment. This is also in contradiction to what is usually said for the posts, that they do not function without the context. It is unbelievable that the entire body of communication covers ten years and through almost 3,000 posts we see around ten topics repeating, with more or less similar messages. It is quite disappointing to see that Facebook fan page has again served only for promoting a candidate's policy, and for calling people to engage, but, at the same time, without any real engagement on the candidate's part. The style and the format of the posts were maybe changing with the improvement of technologies, but the message and the content of the messages stayed pretty much the same from his first term until the last year of the second term. When it comes to the focus on his private and political profile, these categories were not often used, the political profile was in the focus of around 4% of examined posts and the private profile in 8%. On the one hand, this result maybe should not be surprising because it is indeed hard to communicate about your political qualities and characteristics on your own Facebook, while the private profile can be in overall focus even with one single photo of his family, where he does not have to add anything. Yet, personalisation might not be intense, but it was still present and manifested mainly through the visibility of Obama in the posted photos. Moreover, the photos of him appeared in different formats, like in the behind the scenes format or the portrait photo. These photos often looked very professional and were made to leave a strong impression.

Personalisation on Cameron's Facebook fan page

David Cameron talked about the same topics most of the time, mainly about the economy. Whether it is a topic that the Conservatives traditionally have in focus, or whether it is a lack of a broader strategy for his communication, it is hard to say. Yet his inconsistent communication about the EU and related issues also shows that he did not have a clear picture of what the UK should look like after his terms in office. Looking back, he will only be remembered as someone who is to blame for Brexit. The importance of the economy for Cameron is seen from the different strategies that he used on Facebook to stress how dedicated he is to support the economic growth of the UK. Cameron, in his communication, was focused on primary existential human needs, safety, jobs... His Facebook fan page looked more like a Twitter account. Although he was present in more than half of the posted photos, it has to be noted that his posts did not contain photos in more than 40% of all examined posts. His private and political profiles were very rarely in the overall focus of examined Facebook posts which tells that the personalisation on his Facebook was not intense and it was characterised mostly with Cameron's appearance in the photos which had issues in the overall focus.

Personalisation on Josipović's Facebook fan page

In the case of Ivo Josipović, we could say that he used his Facebook fan page as a sort of itinerary, announcing where he would be at a certain time, inviting citizens to come, and then publishing photos and some highlights of these activities, concerts, giving speeches, meeting citizens and different interest groups. In this context, the former Croatian President tried to communicate complex issues, such as changes to the Constitution, regional and local constituencies, etc. Additionally, he often mentioned veterans and religion. These topics are traditionally related to the right-wing party, the Croatian Democratic Community, while Josipović was supported by the left-wing party, the Social Democratic Party. It is clear that he did not sound honest and convincing when communicating these topics. That might be one of the reasons why he lost the elections for a second term. He did not appear authentic and honest. His private and political profile appeared rarely in the overall focus, but he was often present in the photos in the posts. His appearance was usually related to campaigning or with his ceremonial duties.

To sum up, it is revealed that all three politicians primarily used their Facebook fan pages to communicate issues, and, secondly, they used it for campaigning and for posting different sorts of announcements. These findings lead to the conclusion that political actors use Facebook

predominantly as an official channel for communicating political and everyday activities. The strategies that were most often used are also focused on political messages. All three leaders often used strategies to highlight accomplishments and call for changes. The second similarity between the three political actors is found in their focus on ordinary citizens. Ordinary citizens are present in more than 25% of all of the photos in each examined case. Moreover, interaction with citizens was used as one of the most frequent strategies in Obama's and Josipović's posts. That tells us that they also used Facebook to show their supporters and to present how much ordinary people are important to them, to give the impression that their fan page is a platform where they can all gather. The presence of ordinary people in the photos sends a message that many are with them and that you should join them as well.

Also, the analysis revealed that the visibility of candidates was very high and that all three politicians appear in around 50% of all of the photos posted on their fan pages. This finding suggests that the Facebook pages of political actors were personalised to some extent. Examining the photos, which most often make up an integral part of the post on Facebook, was an important part of this study, which is amongst the first studies alongside the study conducted by Metz et al. (2019), in which visual elements of Facebook posts were also examined, in comparison to most other studies, in which only the textual part of the posts was analysed. Before social media, politicians did not have so many opportunities to communicate through photos. It was only in campaign materials and on the political parties' web sites that they had a chance to choose and select those photos which they wanted to become public. Now, in social media era, they need to have new photos every day.

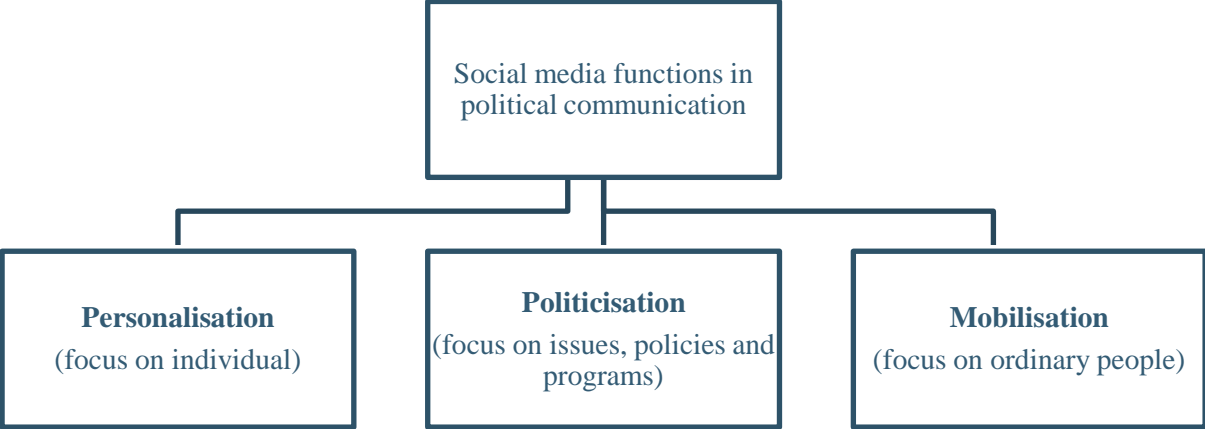
Social media functions

Relying on these findings, the usage of Facebook in political communication can be looked at through three of its different functions: politicisation, personalisation and mobilisation (Figure 5.41). Politicisation refers to the focus on issues and policies, personalisation is focused on individuals, and mobilisation is related to the ordinary citizens and to activities which refer to them.

A similar classification of politicians' Facebook posts is found in McGregor et al. (2017, p. 271), who coded posts from their sample into four categories: personal, campaign, policy, and off-topic. These authors, in their paper, discovered that among the eighteen examined major-party candidates in the 2014 gubernatorial races in the United States, during the entire election

year, as an expected category, campaigning was most often used, in more than 50% of almost 10,000 Facebook posts that were examined, while 18% of posts were policy-oriented, 9% were personal, and 18% were off-topic.

Figure 5. 41: Social media functions in political communication



Source: Author’s own contribution.

While the politicisation and mobilisation functions appeared to be similar, to some extent, among the three countries, the personalisation function manifested differently in different countries. We measured personalisation through the private and political profile in overall focus, visibility of political actors in photos, through the presence of cues from the private lives of the examined politicians, and references to popular culture. As already mentioned, the examined politicians were present in around 50% of all of the posted photos on their fan pages, which means that their visibility was high. That does not surprise us, because it is not wrong to expect that personalisation would increase when a politician employs a communication platform that was, in the first place, imagined as a platform for sharing personal information (McGregor et al., 2017, p. 271).

To conclude: Obama used his Facebook fan page for setting his agenda and self-promotion. Obama’s communication on Facebook was highly professionalised and strategically planned. He had a lot of professional, retouched and filtered photos on his fan page. Usually, these photos generated the highest number of interactions. It can be said that in his case personalisation was not very intense as it was expected but it was strategically planned and used for his self-promotion and for promoting different issues. Cameron used his fan page as a single-issue propaganda tool. His focus was the economy. He used Facebook as if it was Twitter, often

communicating without photos with short messages that looked more like tweets and not like Facebook posts. Personalisation on Cameron's Facebook was primarily used to present him as a worker who is focused on the economy. In this context, he even often appeared wearing yellow vests on different construction sites. Finally, Josipović used Facebook primarily for his ceremonial duties, visits, meetings with officials, and for campaigning. With his appearance in the photos, he mainly tried to send a message that he is an approachable and kind president. Personalisation in his case was used to "get him closer to citizens".

5.5.2 Different levels of privatisation on Facebook

Privatisation was examined relying on Holtz-Bacha's (2004, pp. 49-50) directions for privatisation: humanisation, emotionalization and acquiring celebrity status. Although the private profile was rarely the overall focus of the posts in examined cases, looking at these directions in which privatisation operates, it is clear that privatisation was present in all three of the examined cases. Indicators of humanisation were the different settings in which they appeared, the presence of ordinary people in the posts, the references to private lives, and the presence of family members in the photos. Indicators of emotionalization were the emotional appeals in the posts while striving for celebrity status was visible in references to popular culture in the posts and the presence of celebrities in the photos.

Barack Obama and privatisation on Facebook

Obama very often appeared as an ordinary citizen, playing basketball, baseball, wearing casual clothes, eating a hamburger and interacting with ordinary citizens on many occasions. Obama was indeed a President to hug. While shaking hands with ordinary citizens is a well-known strategy that always works, Obama again raised that strategy to a higher level. He was not shaking hands, he was hugging ordinary people, and he did that very often. It is important to note that he always looked authentic and honest while doing this, he looked as if it came to him very naturally to hug someone. He was often photographed in outfits that were categorised as combined or casual, where combined referred to an outfit in which he appeared without a tie, usually with a shirt and rolled sleeves, while he was in a casual outfit when photographed with his daughters, dogs, playing basketball or baseball.

Although it might be assumed that Obama would use Facebook often to expose his private life, especially if we keep in mind how close and connected he always appears in the media with his

wife Michelle, and how the whole “Obama family” was popular, the results reveal that his private profile was the overall focus of 8.66% of the posts, or in 243 posts out of 2,804 examined posts. Less than nine percent of posts with a connection to his private life as the focus does not seem that many, but still, these are the posts in which he voluntarily revealed segments from his private life. Interestingly, it has been shown that sometimes he published the same photos several times, as when the family portrait was used on a few occasions, even with a time difference of three or four years. This could mean that he was really not very eager about showing his family photos. It may also mean that the media are actually responsible for building his private persona in public. It is the media who were interested in Michelle Obama’s fashion style, it is the media who wanted to know everything about his daughters and, judging by the posts from Obama’s official fan page, it was he who tried to protect them from such huge exposure by rationing their appearance just enough to satisfy the journalists’ curiosity. Furthermore, as Grbeša points out, the privatisation of politics can appear in many other shapes (2008). In the first place, through the visibility of politicians’ families. Obama’s family members, including their family dogs, have become globally famous. Since Obama, in the mainstream media, is often framed as a family man, I was expecting to see more posts with his family as the overall focus, but that did not happen very frequently. Yet when he appeared with his family that always generated tremendous citizen engagement. It is not a surprise to see a politician with his family, especially at election times, but Obama with his family was something different. They always appeared very intimate, they were always in psychical contact, holding hands, hugging or cuddling each other, his daughters, for instance, were often sitting on his lap, and so on.

Another characteristic was the use of emotions on every occasion. Yet although it was full of emotions, it sometimes lacked honesty and creativity. From this perspective, it is also much easier to understand why so many people voted for Donald Trump and why his communication on social media, Twitter in the first place, is so popular among many. Trump appears to be honest and direct. That also concurs with the argument that Enli offers in her paper, in which she introduces amateurism as a strategy in social media political communication (2015). This result supports the findings of other studies. For instance, in her article about the Facebook usage in the US Presidential campaign in 2012, Jenny Bronstein analysed 513 Facebook posts from the Barack Obama and Mitt Romney Facebook pages, collected during the last three months of the campaign. Posts were identified for their different elements of the Aristotelian language of persuasion (Bronstein, 2013). The author found that tapping into the emotions of

citizens is often a tactic used by politicians. She also confirms that posts containing elements of persuasion had an impact on the user's reactions (2013, p. 185). When it comes to attacks, Obama used them on Facebook very rarely which confirms the thesis that Facebook is a place for positive communication and emotions (Carter, 2012, p. 3) and that social media are not often used to attack opponents (Boulianne, 2016; Evans, Cordova, & Sipole, 2014). The Obama team certainly knew this, and because of that, there was very little negative communication on his social media. Even if it existed, it was "under the radar", conducted by using micro-targeting (Serazio, 2014, p. 745). Obama was mostly spreading messages of hope and enthusiasm (Jackson & Lilleker, 2010; Bronstein, 2013) thereby setting a trend of positive communication on social networks. On the other hand, some authors state that Twitter is, nevertheless, a place where you can more easily attack someone, and openly express opinions and moods (Larsson, 2015; Ott 2016; Enli, 2017). Of course, in saying this, it should be remembered that the Twittersphere is greatly affected by Donald Trump's negative and aggressive communication.

Further, "striving for celebrity status" was also present in Obama's posts, when he appeared with celebrities, but more than that, this strategy is demonstrated when, for instance, he signs a baseball, when he sings in a late-night show, when his photos appear as illustrations, photoshopped. Yet, when it comes to popular culture cues and the presence of celebrities in the photos, the numbers are surprisingly low. The assumption that references to popular culture would be numerous, was false. Celebrities, popular music, TV series, TV shows, movies, or any other references to popular culture, were mentioned very rarely, in less than 3% of all of the examined posts. Knowing that Obama was supported by many celebrities and that he is a fan of some popular series, like *House of Cards* or *Game of Thrones*, this finding was completely unexpected. I tried to interpret this result by suggesting that popular culture cues might be a strategy that was saved for the traditional media.

If elements of popular culture are primarily used to attract voters, then why was popular culture neglected on the platform on which the examined political actors had the greatest number of fans? An even more interesting question is: why were popular culture cues present on Twitter, and not on Facebook? To answer such questions, political actors' Twitter accounts should be analysed, and interviews with social media strategists need to be conducted in order to discover what was the reasoning behind this strategy. Yet, I was able to make some assumptions about possible explanations. First, Twitter is a popular channel among journalists, politicians, and opinionmakers. Many studies have so far examined how Twitter is used by opinionmakers

(Dang-Xuan, Stieglitz, Wladarsch, & Neuberger, 2013), journalists (Brautović, John and Milanović-Litre, 2013), and politicians in electoral campaigns (Larsson & Moe, 2012). Moreover, some analyses show that journalists make up the largest category of Twitter's verified users¹² (Kamps, 2015, May 25). Among 150,000 verified users, 24.6% are journalists, according to the report, which is based on a sample of 15,000 verified Twitter accounts (Kamps, 2015, May 25). It may be that Obama was particularly targeting journalists with popular culture cues because he wanted to earn their sympathies and to give them content for the mainstream media. If that content was already on Facebook, and millions already know about it, the public would not be that interested in seeing it again in the mainstream media. This means that popular culture might be something that is still primarily a strategy for traditional media, while Twitter, in many cases, serves as a channel for reaching journalists.

David Cameron and privatisation on Facebook

David Cameron also appeared among ordinary citizens, mainly workers in factories and on construction sites. By using ordinary people who work hard he also tries to present himself as one of them. As was already said, he even appeared wearing yellow-vests and often a shirt with sleeves rolled-up. However, his face expression was often serious, and he did not try very hard to appear warm and smiling. When it comes to his family life, while Obama in some ways included his whole family in the political life, which is why we would very often hear about the "Obama family, or Obamas" and we all knew what his daughters looked like, and so on, in Cameron's case, we would very rarely hear "Cameron's family, or the Camerons", and never on Facebook. On Facebook there was also only one photo with his entire family, and the overall focus of that post was not his private profile, but Brexit. Moreover, the photo was linked to an article in the *Daily Mail*, and the children's faces were blurred. That shows the tremendous difference between the US and the UK. Obama on many occasions shared moments with his daughters on Facebook, and the whole family even had an "official portrait" of the Obama family. David Cameron, in the UK, had less than 2% of any references to his private or family life. Only on a few occasions he shared joyful moments with Samantha, kissing and hugging her. Moreover, when his wife Samantha appeared in the posts it was almost always related to

¹² Verified users are Twitter users with the blue verified badge on Twitter which stands as proof that an account of public interest is authentic. "An account may be verified if it is determined to be an account of public interest. Typically, this includes accounts maintained by users in music, acting, fashion, government, politics, religion, journalism, media, sports, business, and other key interest areas. A verified badge does not imply an endorsement by Twitter." <https://help.twitter.com/en/managing-your-account/about-twitter-verified-accounts>

promoting a certain issue, Brexit, small business and the economy in general. Yet in his posts we could find references to popular culture (6%), although these were again mostly related to issues. For instance, he referred to the article in which British movie stars express their opinion about why they think that the UK is stronger in the European Union.

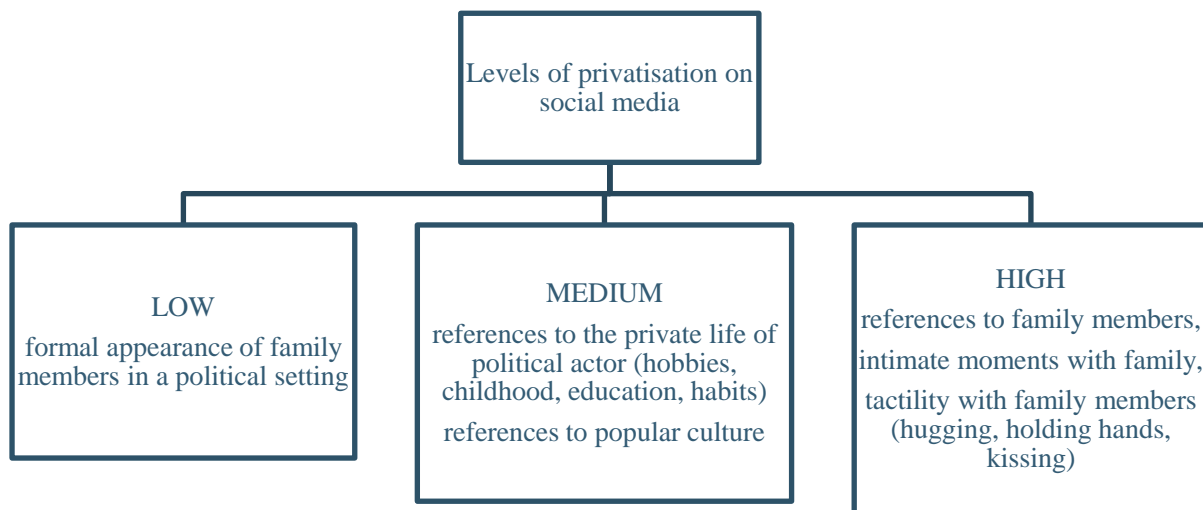
Ivo Josipović and privatisation on Facebook

When looking at the former President in Croatia Ivo Josipović, we find that he often used ordinary people as his strategy, that he often appeared among them and that they were often present in the photos. In this context, he tried to appear relaxed, smiling, simple and approachable. Yet, he always wore a suit with a tie and almost never appeared in a casual outfit. His family members were hidden far from the eyes of the public. His wife almost exclusively appeared only in the context of his official presidential duties, his meetings with foreign statesmen and their wives or husbands. His daughter did not appear on his Facebook fan page even once in the examined posts. However, he did reveal some elements from his private life, where he went to college, when he had a medical operation, which music he loves, when was his birthday etc. Also, he had references to popular culture in about 8% of all of the examined posts. A higher percentage of references to popular culture can, to some extent, be explained by presidential ceremonial duties that require him/her to attend different events that are sometimes associated with popular culture.

Different levels of privatisation

Relying on these findings on privatisation in social media, we notice that there are different levels of privatisation. The first level is a low level of privatisation in which private persons are politicised, this level of privatisation is associated with the appearance of family members in formal and ceremonial events, where they appear officially and in a political setting (Figure 5.42). This category can be linked with Langer's definition of the politicisation of private personae (2010). A medium level of privatisation refers to mentions of elements from the private life of a political actor, such as what his/her hobbies are, what was their childhood like, where did they go to school, what food do they like? In this category are also placed references to popular culture, revealing what music they like, what their favourite tv series and movies are, which stars support them, etc. This category is related to Holtz-Bacha's (2004) goal of privatisation, which she calls "striving for celebrity status". The third level of privatisation is high privatisation. This intends to be revealing intimate moments with family members, including tactility, hugging, kissing, cuddling, holding hands.

Figure 5. 42: Levels of privatisation on social media



Source: Author's own contribution.

Following, in the online communication of Barack Obama, we find high levels of privatisation. As a matter of fact, Obama himself introduced this new way of intimisation into political communication. When he was featured with his wife or daughters, you could really feel the love that they shared. Before Obama, it was not so common to see a politician hugging his wife, holding each other's hands or kissing each other. One of these moments, when Obama is spontaneously hugging Michelle and holds her strongly in his arms during the campaign for the second mandate, has become one of the most shared photos on Twitter ever. And that is what I call a high level of privatisation – expressing true feelings, giving his wife a strong hug and holding her for a few minutes. They could have saved that hug for later, behind the photo objectives, but they did not, they could have had a more formal, short hug, but they did not. They did not, because they wanted to show the world how much they care about each other. In his case, we also find both medium and low levels of privatisation, which was interestingly less represented.

David Cameron, according to this differentiation, used both low and medium levels of privatisation, while the high level was present only on one occasion when he kissed his wife. The low and medium in his case also refers to other settings than just political but in which again the focus was on politics, like when Samantha appears with him in a butcher's shop to support small business in the UK.

Lastly, in Ivo Josipović 's case, the high level of privatisation never appeared, the low level appeared very rarely, and the medium level was used most often. Especially in the context of popular culture which appeared to be his tactic to get closer to ordinary people.

5.5.3 Drivers of interactions on Facebook: private lives and emotions

In this part of the discussion, we analysed if different cues that were communicated in Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook fan pages encouraged or discouraged Facebook users to like, comment or share. Summative findings from the regression analysis are displayed in Table 5.4. Only those variables were included in the table that had a significantly positive or negative effect on citizens' engagement – shares, comments and likes. If, for instance, some variable had a positive effect on the number of likes, comments and shares, it is marked with three pluses in the table, if it had a negative effect on, for instance, the number of likes and shares, it got two minuses.

The first part of the table shows issue/political-related content in the posts. It is shown that in some cases issues communicated in the posts worked to encourage or discourage citizens to like, comment or share. For instance, in Obama's case, only the issue related to the minority rights had positive effects on numbers of interactions. The issue of the economy, which was so often in the overall focus of David Cameron's posts had a negative impact on the numbers of interactions. On the other hand, issues focused on Brexit had a positive effect. In the Croatian political system the President has formal powers only in the area of foreign affairs and national security, topics that are usually not so important to citizens, for which reason, specific issues were not so often communicated on Josipović's fan page and citizens were not very interested in liking, commenting or sharing those posts.

Since Cameron in numerous cases did not even have photos in the posts, in this part of the analysis it is shown that it was a poor strategy or better said, a lack of strategy, because Facebook users appreciated having photos in the posts and honoured these posts with higher numbers of likes and shares. In Obama's case, who most often had photos in his posts and also often appeared in these photos, the analysis revealed that Facebook users gave more likes, comments and shares to these photos in which he appeared.

Table 5. 4: Comparison of statistically significant effects of variables on political leaders' interactions on Facebook

Variables	Predicted effects	Observed effects		
		Obama	Cameron	Josipović
<i>Political context</i>				
Issues in overall focus	-	/	/	+
Economy issue	-	/	--	/
Brexit	-	x	+++	x
Security issue	-	/	+	/
Minority rights	/	+++	/	/
Call for action	+	/	--	/
<i>Personalisation</i>				
Leader in photo	+	+++	/	-
Political profile in focus	+	+	/	/
<i>Privatisation</i>				
Private life in focus	+	++	/	++
Family members in photos	+	+++	+++	/
Ordinary citizens in photos	+	---	---	--
<i>Emotionalization</i>				
Emotional appeals	+	+++	++	+
<i>Popular culture</i>				
Popular culture	+	/	+	/
Celebrity in photo	+	/	---	++
<i>Technical elements</i>				
Photo	+	/	++	/

Source: Author's own calculation.

Legend: / no statistically significant effect; x not applicable in this case; + positive effect on one of three types of interaction (likes, comments or shares); ++ positive effect on two different interactions; +++ positive effects on likes, comments and shares; - negative effect on likes, comments or shares; -- negative effect on two types of interactions; --- negative effect on likes, comments and shares

Interestingly, the presence of ordinary people in the photos, which is defined as humanisation or as one of the goals of privatisation, had a negative effect on citizens' engagement in all three of the examined cases. As already discussed, this is, to some extent, a surprising finding, because a social media success story is grounded in ordinary people. Yet it tells us that citizens, when they come onto a politician's fan page, want to see him or her and their family members, and they do not want to look at ordinary people, who are just like them. Also, most of the photos in which ordinary people were featured looked like amateur photos, and it has already been mentioned that everyone prefers nice, professional and high-quality photos, retouched and stylised photos, photos that look "Instagram likeable"¹³.

¹³ "Instagram likeable" is an expression that has been used recently to describe the content on Instagram that will most probably get numerous likes. There is a lot of advice about how to make content on Instagram which will attract many interactions. In most of these "Instagram likeable" posts, many online tools are used to make the visuals look very attractive. One of the most often mentioned pieces of advice is to use online design tools, such as Spark Post, or Venngage.

Emotional appeals in the posts had an engaging effect for all three of the political actors, yet the levels of engagement differ among the three of them. While, in Obama's case, emotional appeals in the posts had a positive effect on the number of shares, likes and comments, it also had a positive effect on the number of likes and shares on Cameron's fan page, and, in the case of Josipović, only the number of likes was more numerous.

The third category that had the same positive effect on the citizens' engagement in all three of the examined cases is private life. To this category, I also added the category "family members in the photo" because, in Cameron's case, the presence of family members, mostly his wife, Samantha, had a positive effect on the number of likes, shares and comments, while posts with the private life as a focus did not have any effect and, in Josipović's case, it was the opposite. Either way, the results show that cues from private life have an engaging effect on citizens in different countries.

Further, the presence of celebrities in the photos posted on the fan pages of the selected politicians had different effects. Celebrities in the photos had a negative effect on the number of all interactions in Cameron's case, but they had a positive effect in Josipović's case. It has previously been discussed that, in the UK, Cameron rarely had celebrities in photos. Considering that the appearance of celebrities in the photos had a negative effect on the number of interactions, it looks as if avoiding celebrities was a good strategy. Yet it has to be stressed, once again, that celebrities mostly appeared in relation to certain issues, while in Josipović's case they appeared most of the time as his music recommendations but also in his campaign for the second term. In Obama's case, we had a combined variable consisting of references to popular culture and the presence of celebrities in photos but this variable did not have either a positive or a negative effect on citizens' engagement on his page.

To sum up, it is revealed that emotional appeals and private cues have a positive effect on the number of interactions in all three of the cases and that the appearance of ordinary people in the photos has a negative effect in all three of the selected cases. In relation to the third research question, it can be answered that personalised traits communicated in the Facebook posts, indicated mainly through emotional appeals and private lives, but also the presence of leaders in photos, had a positive effect on Facebook users' numbers of likes, comments and shares.

6 CONCLUSION

Relying on the idea that political communication has become more personalised in recent decades, the main goal of this study was to look at the phenomenon of personalisation of political communication on Facebook fan pages of the three leaders: Barack Obama (former President of the US), David Cameron (former Prime Minister of the UK) and Ivo Josipović (former President of Croatia).

The first objective of the thesis was to empirically test the personalisation of online political communication of three political leaders in three different countries. Personalisation was here conceptualised as political actors' communication strategy on Facebook. Drawing on the notion that personalisation might be differently manifested in different countries, I chose to study the leaders of two established Western democracies (the US and the UK) and one post-communist democracy (Croatia).

The second objective of the study was to examine how, if at all, personalisation encourages citizens' online engagement. More precisely, it examines if Facebook users' engagement, expressed in numbers of likes, comments and shares, may be explained by personalised cues that are communicated in the posts.

The theoretical chapter was divided into three main parts. In the first part, the process of mediatisation of politics was discussed. The second part was set out to elaborate on the phenomenon of personalisation of politics with the focus being on personalisation of political communication. The third part dealt with the rise of social media and how they affect political communication. Lastly, it is discussed how the internet and social media enabled new forms of citizens' engagement in politics. The theory of mediatisation served as the starting point to build a theoretical framework for this research. Mediatisation is defined as a change in the relationship between media and society, wherein the media have crucial power and an important role in shaping today's world. The mediatisation of politics means that politics today adapts to and adopts that media logic. Media logic, in this context, is used to explain how political messages are selected, interpreted, and constructed, and which media-specific rules and formats are used in these processes (Esser, 2013). Media logic means that politicians, while making political decisions, think about the media all the time; they think about how the media will present what they did or said. In other words, media logic is a "built-in part of the governing

processes” (Strömbäck, 2008, p. 240) and personalisation is at the core of this media-centred politics. However, in recent years social media have started to challenge the dominance of the mainstream media in the media-politics relation, primarily because of their “unmediated” nature and the possibility for politicians to control their messages and communicate directly with voters. The assumption is that mainstream media have reached the “era of minimal effect” (Bennet & Iyengar, 2008), while politics has been increasingly shifting from media logic to “social media logic” (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Social media logic and media logic are different, but overlapping (Klinger & Svensson, 2014). This means that communication on social media is still “mediated” because politicians are again forced to adopt and adapt to the logic of the new platforms, although the media logic is mostly journalist-driven, while on the other hand, the social media logic is primarily platform-driven. In traditional media, journalists decide when and how they will publish something, while on social media, politicians have the opportunity to decide themselves what they will publish, although they still need to adjust that content to the requirements of a specific platform. However, it seems that social media share the same “news values” as traditional mass media: simplification of issues, emotionalization, conflict, horse-race reporting, personalisation, and other storytelling techniques. Additionally, it is suggested that social media intensify these values.

The second part of the theoretical framework focused on the phenomenon of personalisation, wherein personalisation was defined as the growing importance of individual politicians in decision-making processes, voting behaviour and political communication (Holtz-Bacha et al, 2014). Personalisation was thus conceptualised on three different levels: as personalisation of political power, or greater concentration of power in the hands of leaders; as personalisation of voters’ judgements, which happens when voters decide to vote for the party based on how much they approve of the leader, and finally, as personalisation of political communication. Personalisation is strongly conditioned by the media environment, the process of modernisation and type of political system. The advent of television and commercialisation of the media market have contributed to the rise of candidate-centered politics. Modernisation of society has prompted the deterioration of social ties and dissolution of group attachments. Since party loyalty was fading amongst the electorate, the parties had to find other incentives to attract voters. They identified them in short-term factors, such as the candidates and their seductive personalities. The third driver of personalisation is the political system of a certain country, which is believed to shape the process of personalisation (Adam & Maier, 2010). For instance, it is suggested that presidential systems are, by definition, more personalised than parliamentary

systems. The personalisation of political communication has been mostly concerned with: a) increasing media attention given to individual politicians, at the expense of parties as collectives, programs and issues, and, b) with the growing visibility of the candidates in the strategic communication of parties (Grbeša, 2010). In this study, the focus was on the “strategic” dimension of the personalisation of political communication, i.e., it was examined if, and in what way, politicians use personalisation as a communication strategy on social media platforms. More specifically, the study dealt with the concept of the privatisation of politics, which is defined as permeation of the private into the political. The concept describes the blurring of the line between private and public, both on the side of the media and politics. The media are increasingly more interested in the private side of politicians’ lives, rather than in their political personalities, while at the same time politicians’ strategically reveal cues from their private lives, in order to gain votes, media attention, and to advance their political goals. Privatisation comes in many different forms, from subtle “humanisation” to explicit use of family members and family matters. It also often comes mixed with popular culture, building a full-scale celebrity agenda for the politician (Street, 2016). Popularisation was in this study regarded as another sub-dimension of personalisation, alongside with privatisation.

The third, part of the theoretical chapter is dedicated to political communication on social media, which, because of their nature, personalise political communication even more (Ekman & Widhlof, 2014; Metz et al, 2019; Vergeer et al, 2013). Politicians now have their own communication channels where they can represent themselves as they wish, including disclosing elements from their personal and private life. Yet, most research suggests that social media are still primarily used for communicating political topics, permanent campaigning and setting the agenda. The agenda-setting function has been exercised mostly by using the broadcasting function of social media, while the interactivity function has been less used (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). The appearance of politicians on social media has contributed to the professionalisation of online communication and election campaigns in particular (Kreiss, 2014; Stromer-Galley, 2014). Yet, trends on social media are changing so rapidly that it took only a few years for the communication paradigm to shift from Obama’s professional online communication with standardised messages and research-based methods to Trump and his furious, “authentic” Tweets, based on gut-feeling (Enli, 2017). Professionalisation, permanent campaigning, informalisation, amateurism, authenticity, followed by the growing importance of the social media logic and the phenomenon of personalisation, pretty much sum up the main trends in contemporary political communication, fostered by the rise of social media. Finally,

drawing on the notion that the internet in general, and particularly social media, have the potential to bring politics closer to citizens, the chapter discusses the evidence on citizens' online engagement. It argues that commenting on political posts, 'liking' and sharing political content may be regarded as new forms of online engagement. It also assumes that there is a correlation between personalisation and its sub-dimensions (privatisation and popularisation) and the amount of engagement.

The empirical section of the study consists of four parts. The first three parts of the analysis investigate personalisation on the level of politicians' communication strategy on Facebook, while the fourth part of the analysis investigates personalisation on the level of citizens' incentive/stimulus to engage online. The first part of the research investigated the character and intensity of personalisation on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. The second and third part examined the strategic use of private and popular cues on politicians' fan pages. The fourth part explored which traits communicated on Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook fan pages encouraged or discouraged citizens' engagement. The units of analysis were Facebook posts published on the Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović. The final sample included 2804 posts that were published on Obama's Facebook fan page between 2008 and 2016, 1317 posts from Cameron's Facebook page, which were posted from 2013 until 2016 and 850 posts from Josipović's fan page, which were posted in the period from 2010 to 2015.

6.1 The character and intensity of personalisation

The character and intensity of personalisation in the selected cases were examined by using different indicators designed to identify personal vs. political content in Facebook posts. The findings revealed that personalisation as an online communication strategy comes in different forms. The overall focus of the posts was rarely about Obama's, Cameron's or Josipović's political or private profile (personal profile¹⁴ was in the overall focus of nearly 13% of examined posts in Obama's case, in 3,5% of Cameron's posts and around 4% of Josipović's posts). However, the visibility of examined politicians in the photos as another indicator of personalisation was high: they appeared in around half of the examined posts which contained photo in all cases (49% of Obama's posts, 66% of Cameron's and 60% of Josipović's post).

¹⁴ Personal profile here refers to the sum of political and private profile in the Overall focus of the post.

Examined politicians were in their communication on Facebook primarily focused on political content related with issues (in 54% of examined posts on Obama's fan page, in 67% Cameron's examined posts and in 42% of all examined posts on Josipović's fan page). Also, it is revealed that campaigning and giving different announcements was often in the overall focus of Obama's, Cameron's and Josipović's Facebook communication (campaigning in 16% and announcements in 9% of Obama's posts, campaigning in 7% and announcements in 17% in Cameron's case while in Josipović's case campaigning was in the overall focus of 33% and announcements in 16% examined posts). Categories dominant strategy, type of the post and call for action disclosed that communication on Facebook was often focused on ordinary citizens who were involved in campaign-related activities and who appeared often in the photos (in almost 30% Obama's posts, 26% of Cameron's examined posts and in 34% of Josipović's posts), but also related to different issues, especially in Obama's and Cameron's case.

These findings suggest that politicians on Facebook were primarily focused on issues, then to a lesser degree on citizens, and then finally on themselves. The focus on issues may be conditionally labelled as the "politicising function of social media", the focus on citizens may be regarded as the "mobilising function of social media", while the third, the least used function, may be considered the "personalising function of social media". The most significant difference comes when we look at the third suggested function, which was most often used on Obama's fan page, while Cameron and Josipović used it rarely. Cameron's and Obama's Facebook fan pages mostly focused on issues in the strict meaning of the word (policies, programs etc.), while on Josipović's page campaigning and announcements were the most dominant.

To conclude, personalisation of political communication on Facebook fan pages of Obama, Cameron and Josipović was not intense. Yet, it was present and mostly manifested through the photos of selected politicians in their Facebook posts. Also, the character of personalisation in selected cases was different revealing that they wanted to send different messages. Obama used different photos in different settings. These photos were often very professional and retouched, leaving a strong impression of a world leader who cares about the environment, human rights, but also about the prosperity of every American citizen. He was also portrayed as a family man. To the contrary, Cameron mostly appeared in the role of a man who works very hard to improve the economy and the security of British citizens. Josipović usually appeared in the photos in the context of presidential ceremonial duties and in the context of campaigning for the second term. He tried to leave the impression of an approachable president who is among the citizens.

6.2 Private and popular on different levels

The second research question asked how private and popular cues were used to communicate on Barack Obama's, David Cameron's and Ivo Josipović's Facebook fan pages. Different goals of privatisation defined by Holtz-Bacha (2004) were examined: humanisation, emotionalization and striving for celebrity status. Indicators of humanisation were: different settings in which examined politicians appeared, the presence of ordinary people in the posts, visibility of family members in the photos and references to family lives and other aspects of private lives, for instance, hobbies, childhood, favourite food, books, TV shows, music.

The findings revealed that ordinary people were often used as a dominant strategy in Facebook posts of Barack Obama and Ivo Josipović (21% and 34%). Moreover, they were often present in the posts of all three examined politicians and all three politicians were often photographed among ordinary people trying to leave an impression of simple people who are among "equals". Yet, all three politicians were very reluctant to reveal their private lives. Obama had family members present in the photos in 7% of all his examined posts, while Cameron's family appeared in only 2% and Josipović's family members in just 1.6% of examined posts on his fan page. Cameron was the least interested in making references to hobbies, favourite music etc. He did that in less than 1% of the examined posts. Josipović used private cues, other than family members, in 5.5% of his posts, and Obama in less than 5% of the posts.

On the other hand, emotionalization was overwhelmingly used by Obama (in more than 64% posts), but also by Cameron (in around 64% posts) and Josipović (in 72% posts). Obama managed to emotionalise his online communication primarily using emotionally loaded photos, often with quotations that contained emotionally augmented words. Cameron was often emotional in his statements on the economy, and he often sounded thrilled with positive results, but also angry about issues related to Brexit or the Labour party. He often used his Facebook fan page to express his condolences for tragedies around the world (the Paris terrorist attack, the war in Syria, floods), but also to offer condolences to the family members of politicians who had passed away. Josipović's emotional appeals were mostly related to campaigning, and to his efforts to appear enthusiastic and to motivate citizens to join him on the way for more "just" Croatia. These findings support the notion that social media have emotionalised political communication in the same way as television has decades ago (Hart, 1998; Meyrowitz, 1985).

The next task was to determine how often these politicians used references to popular culture and how often celebrities appeared in posted photos. The findings were rather unexpected and revealed that popular culture was rarely mentioned on Facebook fan pages of Obama, Cameron and Josipović. Josipović referred to popular culture the most, in 8% of his posts, Cameron in 6% of his posts and Obama in less than 3% of all examined posts on his Facebook fan page. Josipović mostly referred to popular culture in order to promote himself, while Cameron was promoting issues, just like Obama did too.

Based on these findings, I constructed a categorisation of different levels of privatisation: low, medium and high. The low level of privatisation refers to the formal appearance of family members in a political setting. This level of privatisation was found in all three examined cases. A medium level of privatisation occurs when political actors use references to their private life (hobbies, childhood, education, habits) or popular culture. Ivo Josipović resorted to this level of privatisation the most. The third level of privatisation occurs when politicians mention a family member in an informal context, when they share intimate moments with their family, show physical intimacy towards family members (hugging, holding hands, kissing), and when they excessively demonstrate feelings. This type of privatisation was registered mainly in Obama's case, and on very few occasions on David Cameron's page, such as when he kissed his wife Samantha or carried his daughter. The former Croatian president Josipović never used this level of privatisation.

How do we explain these differences in the intensity of privatisation efforts? One possible explanation is that privatisation was used for different goals. Obama used it for self-promotion, Cameron for issue promotion, and Josipović revealed elements from his private life mostly for campaigning purposes. The second explanation could be pinned on the differences between respective political cultures (Swanson & Mancini, 1996, p. 262). While for British politicians it is important to display their rhetorical skills and keen intelligence, US politicians need to demonstrate that they share voters' feelings on important issues (ibid). Authors also find that, in the highly personalised nature of the American political system, it is normal for politicians to publicly reveal elements from their private life and to appear with family members in a private setting (Holtz-Bacha, 2004; McAllister, 2015). On the other hand, Grbeša finds that in Croatia private remains "too private" because of the remnants of the "years of the socialist regime in which the political was strictly divided from the private" (2010, pp. 75-76). The third

explanation lies in the specificities of each candidate and the differences in the context. Barack Obama was, by all characteristics, an ideal candidate for exercising privatisation and popularisation techniques on social media. In 2008, he was a newcomer, which made him even more prone to personalisation and privatisation, because the voters did not know much about him. Previous studies have confirmed that Obama's communication on social media was personalised (Bimber, 2014; Bronstein, 2013; Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015). Yet most of the existing studies examined personalisation during election campaigns, while, in this study, the findings show that personalisation was used as an online communication strategy only to some extent during his two terms as President and that his communication was issue-focused, while privatisation through private life was rarely used.

In Britain, the levels of privatisation depend on characteristics of the candidates (Langer, 2010). For instance, Blair used the private for public purposes very extensively, while his successor, Gordon Brown, was not very comfortable with techniques of the privatisation of politics (Langer, 2011). At the same time, Langer finds that David Cameron, similarly to Tony Blair, did not hesitate to use private cues in the campaign, and that he was good in doing so because he was young, charismatic and informal (ibid). Following, the finding that Cameron used his private life on Facebook very modestly is unexpected, because Cameron himself said that one needs to reveal his private side to the voters if he wants their trust. He was also the one who let *The Sun's* journalists spend one day with him in his official home at 10 Downing Street, revealing in front of the cameras how his day started and ended. Nevertheless, an analysis of his Facebook fan page shows that privatisation was probably a strategy reserved for traditional media. Another possible reason for the lack of privatisation on Facebook is that the selected posts only reach back as far as 2013, so they do not cover the 2010 campaign when David Cameron participated as a newcomer. However, the fact that he did not even have a Facebook page in 2010 indicates that the need to communicate on Facebook was imposed on him, and that is exactly the impression that he leaves on Facebook.

Privatisation in Croatia is strongly linked to the strategy of the candidate himself. Privatisation was most frequently used in the second round of the 2010 elections when Josipović competed against Milan Bandić. However, research has shown that even then Josipović was reluctant to disclose much about his private life to the press (Šimunjak, 2012). An analysis of his Facebook page showed that this trend continued during his term. Still, it was found that Josipović was willing to resort to popular culture, at least to some extent, to attract the voters.

6.3 Drivers and killers of citizens' engagement on Facebook

The third part of the empirical research was set up to answer which traits communicated on Facebook fan pages of Barack Obama, David Cameron and Ivo Josipović had a positive or negative effect on citizens' engagement, expressed in numbers of likes, comments and shares. This part of the analysis is conducted by using selected categories obtained from content analysis and numbers of likes, comments and shares obtained for every examined post. Selected variables and numbers of interactions were included in different regression models, adapted for each case. The assumption was that the posts containing personalised, private and popular cues would have the strongest positive effect on the numbers of likes, comments and shares. The findings for all three examined cases revealed that drivers of engagement on Facebook were those posts which contained emotional appeals. Also, it is revealed that in the case of Obama, issues related to minority rights had a positive effect on the number of interactions, the same as issues related to Brexit and security in Cameron's case. When it comes to cues which had a negative effect on the number of interactions, the findings revealed that the presence of ordinary people in the photos in all three cases worked to discourage Facebook users to like, comment and share. Also, economy issues and the presence of celebrities in photos had a negative effect on the numbers of interactions in Cameron's case.

The findings about the positive effects of emotional appeals in the posts support the results from the latest study by Metz et al. (2019), who, by applying a comprehensive, conceptual model of different types of self-personalisation, found that in Germany emotional and private self-personalisation positively affects audience's engagement. The same result was obtained in the study of Obama's election campaign in 2012, where it was discovered that "emotive language dominated much of the campaign on Facebook in 2012, being employed in more than half of the posts and emerged as one of the three most impactful variables" on citizens' engagement (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015, p. 126).

Although privatisation was rarely used, citizens' engagement was the highest in posts that contained references to family lives (references to family members) and other aspects of private lives (hobbies, favourite food, music, childhood) of examined politicians. Metz et al. tried to give reasons for the similar results that they obtained for Germany: "This audience demand for more private impressions of public figures is in line with a documented rise in journalism's interest in the private life of politicians" (Ekman & Widholm, 2014, cited in Metz et al, 2019,

p. 11). Relying on these findings, it can be concluded that privatisation is primarily citizen-driven and that politicians are not very eager to share their private lives unless they are encouraged to do so in order to attract citizens.

Another interesting finding is that the presence of ordinary people in the photos had a statistically significant negative effect on the numbers of likes, comments and shares, in all three cases. This finding was unexpected because the assumption was that the presence of ordinary people in the photos would have an engaging impact. The results can be partly explained by the appearance of ordinary people in campaign testimonials posted on Facebook, which users might interpret as “fake” or “inauthentic”, but the results still suggest that citizens do not seem to appreciate ordinary people on politicians’ pages.

One more surprising finding was that the presence of celebrities in the photos had a positive effect on the numbers of likes and shares only on Josipović’s fan page. In Obama’s case, it did not have any effect and, most interestingly, on Cameron’s page, the posts which contained photos with celebrities had a significantly lower numbers of likes, comments and shares compared to those posts that did not feature celebrity photos. However, it needs to be said that the celebrities on Obama’s and Cameron’s fan pages usually appeared in the role of advocates for certain issues. This can mean that citizens are not interested in celebrities when they appear in relation to serious issues. They are interested in their private lives and their intimacy, in glamour and sparks of famousness, and their performances. In other words, it might mean that people are more interested in Leonardo DiCaprio’s new girlfriend than in his fight against climate change.

Finally, what do these results tell us about the relationship between social media and personalisation? The study has confirmed findings from previous research that had shown that political communication on Facebook is personalised to some extent, primarily because of the social media logic, i.e., technological architecture, rules and norms of the platform. It has been revealed that personalisation comes in different forms, and that visibility is often used as a strategy by the studied political leaders, as opposed to privatisation. It has also been discovered that privatisation has different levels. A low level of privatisation was used very often in all three examined cases, the medium level was rarely used, while a high level of privatisation was found only in the US context, i.e., on the Facebook fan page of Barack Obama. This finding was expected because the US has a presidential system and a political and media culture that is

prone to personalisation. This suggests that the character and intensity of privatisation are, to a great extent, influenced by the context of a certain country, political system, political and media culture, by the specific electoral context and characteristics of the political actor. In other words, it may be argued that the visibility of politicians, emotionalization, and humanisation through ordinary people are techniques that are commonly used on Facebook, while the usage of the high level of privatisation is more context-dependent.

It has also been found that Facebook is a convenient platform for agenda setting and permanent campaigning and that the politicians included in the analysis used it primarily to communicate about different issues.

Finally, social media have enabled citizens to come closer to politicians; they have enabled them to engage with politicians' social media pages, to comment, to discuss, to like, share, react. The findings show that citizens prefer liking, sharing, and commenting on privatised and emotionalised posts, which suggest that citizens see politicians as celebrities in their own right while citizens themselves behave as celebrity fans. They are interested to learn about politician's private lives in the same way as they are eager to like, comment and share information related to a family, hobbies or intimacy of a movie star.

6.4 Future research

I believe that this research opens up many questions that should be further investigated. Firstly, future studies should look more deeply into the emotionalization of political communication. Most of the studies that have investigated emotions in online communication so far, relied on sentiment analysis mostly run by auto-coded programs (Dang-Xuan et al., 2013; Himelboim et al., 2014). Qualitative methods, such as a multimodal discourse analysis should be employed to further investigate the role of emotions in political communication. The specific focus should be on the role of visuals in emotionalising online communication.

Secondly, the impact of political and/or media system in the personalisation thesis is another topic for further research. Since my research has shown differences in communication of private, political and popular cues between selected cases, a larger sample of selected countries and cases would be able to confirm whether the political and/or media system indeed play an

important role, or if differences are, after all, dependent on characteristics of individual candidates and the electoral context.

Thirdly, it would be most interesting to compare communication on social media and in traditional media in a certain time period. That comparison might give an answer to whether privatisation of politics is more media-driven or it is rather a strategic technique used by the candidates. Moreover, it would be interesting to see who puts private life on the agenda - traditional media or social media.

Also, a comparison of communication on different social media platforms, in the same time period, would present a valuable contribution to the study of personalisation. It would be interesting to investigate which platform is the most personalised and whether there are any differences in exercising personalisation on different social media platforms and not only on the Facebook as it was the case in this study.

Fifth, it would be interesting to study personalisation of political communication on social media from a gender perspective in order to reveal if female politicians use personalisation as a communication strategy to a greater or lesser extent than male politicians. Besides, investigating the use of private traits in online communication of female candidates would reveal to what degree female leaders are eager to expose their private lives in controlled media environments.

Lastly, the consumption side i.e. citizens' engagement should be examined more thoroughly by deploying qualitative methods, such as online ethnography. Online ethnographies should be employed to examine Facebook profiles of online users who most frequently like, comment and share content from Facebook fan pages of politicians.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Code sheet: Facebook posts

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF THE POST

1. Facebook page on which post appears
 1. Barack Obama
 2. David Cameron's
 3. Ivo Josipović's

 2. Year in which post appears
 1. 2008
 2. 2009
 3. 2010
 4. 2011
 5. 2012
 6. 2013
 7. 2014
 8. 2015
 9. 2016

 3. Post contains image
 1. No
 2. Yes
-
- 4.¹⁵ What is the format of the image in the post?
 0. There is no image
 1. Photography
 2. Illustration
 3. Infographic
 4. Picture quotes
 5. Meme or giphy
 6. Image related to the video
 7. Other

 5. Does the photo contain graphs and tables which show figures and data concerning a specific issue?
 0. There is no image
 1. No
 2. Yes

¹⁵ Questions 4 and 5 regarding the format of an image and presence of graphs in photos were applied only in Barack Obama's posts, because a pilot analysis revealed that Cameron and Josipović almost never used these categories, whereas they appeared important in Obama's case.

PERSONALISATION IN THE POST

6. What is the overall focus of the Facebook post?
 1. Electoral process (e.g., voting, suffrage, party system, procedures, etc.)
 2. Issues (statements or comments on party/candidate positions on policy issues or preferences on issues or problems of public concern)
 3. Political profile (focus on political actors' political qualities or characteristics; Obama's/Cameron's/Josipović's, if someone else's, specify whose-----)*
 4. Private profile (focus on candidates' private features or private lives; Obama's/Cameron's/Josipović's, if someone else's, specify whose-----)
 5. Rebuttal
 6. Controversies
 7. Announcement regarding upcoming events, staffing, logistics, anniversaries.
 8. Other
 9. Campaigning (activities related to campaigning, donor dinners, meetings with supporters, testimonials, etc.)

7. Which issue is in the main focus of the Facebook post?
 1. None
 2. Environmental issues
 3. Immigration policy
 4. Economy
 5. Minority rights
 6. Health policy
 7. Religion
 8. Education
 9. Other
 10. Brexit
 11. Security issues

8. What is the dominant strategy of the Facebook post?
 1. Highlighting accomplishments
 2. Making promises for the future
 3. Attack on the opponent's record and/or style of governance
 4. Calling for changes
 5. Emphasising patriotism and endorsing traditional values
 6. Celebrity endorsement
 7. Appearing with foreign politicians and other office holders
 8. Emphasising the candidate (Obama/Cameron/Josipović) as a source of credibility and the main reason to vote for the Party
 9. Emphasising the Party's values, traditional issue positions and/or ideology as the main reason to vote for it
 10. Victorious enthusiasm
 11. Humor, spoof or irony
 12. Other

13. Interaction with an ordinary citizen (when ordinary citizens are the main focus, with their stories or testimonials and/or political leader inviting them to participate in different activities)

9. Does the status message contain a call for action?

1. No
2. Yes

10. The type of the post is predominantly

1. Informative
2. Inspirational
3. Motivational

Visibility

11. If Obama/Cameron/Josipović is in the photo, how is he featured?

0. There is no photo in the post
1. He is not in the photo
2. Obama/Cameron/Josipović in a political setting (with party officials, in a rally etc.)
3. Obama/Cameron/Josipović in a private setting
4. Obama/Cameron/Josipović with celebrities
5. Obama/Cameron/Josipović is interacting with citizens in an informal, familiar way
6. Portrait photo
7. "Behind the scenes"
8. Other

12. Is any other official/foreign politician/office holder featured in the photo?

0. There is no photo in the post
1. No
2. Yes (specify who-----)

PRIVATISATION IN POSTS

Humanisation

13. If Obama/Cameron/Josipović is in the photo, his outfit is?

0. There is no photo in the post
1. He is not in the photo
2. Formal
3. Casual
4. Combined

14. If Obama/Cameron/Josipović is in the photo, he looks?

0. There is no photo in the post
1. He is not in the photo
2. Cold/official/authoritative (serious facial expression)

3. Friendly/warm/interactive (smiling)
 4. Face is not visible (photo from the back, from a distance)
15. Is there an “ordinary” citizen (staged or real) featured in the image?
0. There is no photo in the post
 1. No
 2. Yes
16. Is there a representative of a certain demographic, social or interest group, featured in the image?
0. There is no photo in the post
 1. No
 2. Yes

Private and family life

17. Is Obama’s/Cameron’s/Josipović’s family life mentioned in the post?
1. No
 2. Yes
18. Is any other aspect of Obama’s/Cameron’s/Josipović’s private life, such as pets, hobbies, lifestyle, biography, mentioned in the post?
1. No
 2. Yes (specify-----)
19. Are there any family members present in the photo?
0. There is no photo in the post
 1. No
 2. Yes (specify who) _____

Emotionalization

20. Are emotional appeals used in the post?
1. No
 2. Yes
21. Are logical appeals used in the post?
1. No
 2. Yes
22. Are ethical appeals, or source credibility, used in the post?
1. No
 2. Yes (who) (other than Obama/Cameron/Josipović)

POPULARISATION IN POSTS

23. Is there any reference to popular culture in the post?

1. No
2. Yes (specify-----)

24. Are there any celebrities featured in the image?

0. There is no photo in the post
1. No
2. Yes (specify who) _____

Appendix B. Operationalisation of concepts of personalisation, privatisation and popularisation

Concepts	Operationalisation (indicators)
Personalisation (image vs. issues)	Overall focus in the post
	Main issue in the focus
	Dominant strategy of the post
	Presence of call for action
	Type of the post
	Presence of Obama/Cameron/Josipović in the photos (visibility)
	Other politicians in the posts
Humanisation	Dominant setting in which Obama/Cameron/Josipović appear
	Outfit in which leader appears
	Face expression
	Presence of ordinary people in the photos
Privatisation	References to private life
	References to family life
	Presence of family members in the photos
Emotionalization	Presence of emotional appeals
	Presence of logical appeals
	Presence of ethical appeals
Popularisation and celebrity endorsement	References to popular culture
	Presence of celebrities in photos

Appendix C. Intercoder Reliability Test Values¹⁶

	Coding categories (variables)	N - cases double coded	N - Agree	ICR (2M/N1+N2)
1	Facebook page on which post appears	350	350	1
2	Year in which post is published	350	350	1
3	Post contains photo	350	350	1
4	Format of the post	200	172	0.86
5	Presence of graphs in posts	200	190	0.95
6	Overall focus in the post	350	280	0.80
7	Main issue in the focus	350	281	0.80
8	Dominant strategy of the post	350	253	0.72*
9	Presence of Call for action	350	299	0.85
10	Type of the post	350	285	0.81
11	Dominant setting in which Obama/Cameron/Josipović appears	350	250	0.71**
12	Other politicians in the posts	350	319	0.91
13	Outfit in which leader appears	350	296	0.84
14	Face expression	350	299	0.85
15	Presence of ordinary people in the photos	350	321	0.91
16	Presence of interest groups in the photos	350	290	0.77
17	References to private life	350	285	0.81
18	References to family life	350	330	0.94
19	Presence of family members in the photos	350	350	1
20	Presence of emotional appeals	350	225	0.64***
21	Presence of logical appeals	350	240	0.68****
22	Presence of ethical appeals	350	340	0.97
23	References to popular culture	350	295	0.84
24	Presence of celebrities in photos	350	324	0.92
	AVERAGE ICR VALUE ACROSS CATEGORIES			0.86

* Intracoder reliability test¹⁷: 0.82

** Intracoder reliability test: 0.80

*** Intracoder reliability test: 0.72

**** Intracoder reliability test: 0.80

¹⁶ The average reliability score was calculated using Holsti's method of agreement across all categories. Holsti's (1969) method of agreement is calculated as $2A / (N1+N2)$ whereas A is the number of units on which coders agreed on and N1 and N2 are the number of units coded by each of the coders.

¹⁷ The intracoder reliability test was conducted only on the four variables which had a score lower than 0.75 in the preceding intercoder reliability test.

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- Social media logic...17, 41, 43, 230, 231, 238

Razširjeni povzetek

Uvod

Glavni cilj pričujoče raziskave temelji na ideji, da je postala politična komunikacija v zadnjih desetletjih bolj personalizirana, zato sem pod drobnogled vzela fenomen personalizacije političnega komuniciranja na Facebook straneh treh voditeljev: Baracka Obame (nekdanjega predsednika ZDA), Davida Camerona (nekdanjega premiera Velike Britanije) in Iva Josipovića (nekdanjega predsednika Hrvaške).

Prvi cilj disertacije je bil empirično identificirati razširjenost personalizacije v spletnem političnem komuniciranju treh političnih voditeljev v treh različnih državah. Personalizacija je v delu konceptualizirana kot del komunikacijske strategije političnih akterjev, ki se manifestira znotraj posredovanih objav na omrežju Facebook. Naslanjajoč se na idejo, da se lahko personalizacija manifestira na drugačne načine v različnih državah, sem se odločila proučevati vodje dveh uveljavljenih zahodnih demokracij (ZDA in VB) in ene postkomunistične demokracije (Hrvaška).

Drugi raziskovalni cilj je bil povezan z vprašanjem, kako (če sploh) personalizacija spodbuja spletno vključenost državljanov. Natančneje, delo proučuje, ali lahko angažma uporabnikov Facebooka, ki je izražen s številom všečkov, komentarjev in delitev, razložimo s personaliziranimi lastnostmi, ki so posredovane v spletnih objavah.

Teoretični pregled: personalizacija sreča družbene medije

Področje raziskovanja personalizacije politike in, bolj specifično, personalizacije političnega komuniciranja v kontekstu tradicionalnih množičnih medijev je obsežno (Grbeša, 2010; Holtz-Bacha, 2006; Karvonen, 2010; Langer, 2007; McAllister, 2007; Poguntke in Webb, 2005; Rahat in Sheaffer, 2007; van Zoonen, 2006; Wattenberg, 1991). Mnogi avtorji ugotavljajo, da personalizacijo znotraj sfere politike krepijo mediji in njihova »medijska logika« (Swanson in Mancini, 1996, str. 251; Kriesi, 2011, str. 826). A večina teh študij podrobneje proučuje medijsko personalizacijo, medtem ko je personalizacija kot komunikacijska strategija manj raziskana. Iz tega razloga je v tukajšnji disertaciji personalizacija politike kot del komunikacijske strategije politikov proučevana v specifičnem medijskem okolju, ki ga ne vodi medijska, temveč spletna medijska logika, tj. okolje družbenih medijev.

Raziskovanje personalizacije političnega komuniciranja na družbenih omrežjih se je pojavilo šele pred nedavnim (Bronstein, 2013; Enli, 2017; Enli in Skogerbø, 2013; Kruikemeier in drugi, 2013; Metz in drugi, 2019; Lalancette in Raynauld, 2019). Vzporedno z rastjo raziskovanja spletne politične komunikacije se prav tako širi proučevanje novih oblik družbenega delovanja in političnega angažmaja državljanov preko družbenih medijev (Gerodimos in Justinussen, 2015; Gil de Zu'niga in drugi, 2010; Cogburn in Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Katz in drugi, 2013). Zato so na tem mestu osvetljene tudi nove strategije in taktike, uporabljene v spletni politični komunikaciji, in učinki, ki jih te lahko imajo na nove načine angažmaja državljanov v obliki »všečkanja«, komentiranja in deljenja objavljenih vsebin na družbenih omrežjih.

Teoretsko poglavje je razdeljeno na tri dele. V prvem je razdelan proces mediatizacije politike. Drugi del podrobneje pogleda fenomen personalizacije politike z osredotočanjem na personalizacijo političnega komuniciranja. Tretji del opiše vzpon družbenih medijev in pokaže, kako so ti vplivali na politično komunikacijo. Teorija mediatizacije je služila kot izhodiščna točka za izgradnjo teoretičnega okvira tukajšnje študije. Mediatizacija je definirana kot sprememba v odnosu med mediji in družbo, pri čemer imajo mediji ključno moč in pomembno vlogo pri oblikovanju sodobnega sveta. Mediatizacija politike pomeni, da se ta prilagaja medijski logiki in jo prevzame. Medijska logika v tem kontekstu označuje, kako so politična sporočila izbrana, interpretirana in konstruirana ter katera medijsko specifična pravila in formati so uporabljeni v teh procesih (Esser, 2013). Medijska logika pomeni, da politiki ob političnem odločanju ves čas mislijo na medije; premislijo, kako bodo mediji predstavili tisto, kar so naredili ali rekli. Z drugimi besedami, medijska logika je »vgrajen del procesa vladanja« (Strömbäck, 2008, str. 240), personalizacija pa je v središču te medijsko osredotočene politike. A v zadnjih letih so družbeni mediji začeli izzivati dominacijo *mainstream* medijev v odnosu med mediji in politiko, primarno zaradi svoje »nemediirane« narave in možnosti, da politiki nadzorujejo svoje sporočilo in komunicirajo s svojimi volivci neposredno. Predpostavka pravi, da so osrednji mediji dosegli »obdobje minimalnega učinka« (Bennet in Iyengar, 2008), politika pa se je medtem vse bolj pomikala od medijske logike k »logiki družbenih omrežij« (Van Dijck in Poell, 2013). Logika družbenih omrežij in medijska logika sta različni, a tudi sovpadata (Klinger in Svensson, 2014). To pomeni, da je komunikacija na družbenih omrežjih še vedno »mediirana«, saj so politiki ponovno prisiljeni posvojiti logiko novih platform in se jim morajo prilagoditi, čeprav medijsko logiko poganja predvsem novinarstvo, logiko družbenih omrežij pa na drugi strani poganja tehnološka platforma. V tradicionalnih medijih novinarji odločajo o

tem, kdaj in kako bo kaj objavljeno, na družbenih omrežjih pa imajo politiki priložnost sami odločati, kaj bodo objavili, vendar morajo te vsebine še vedno prilagoditi zahtevam specifične platforme. A zdi se, da si družbena omrežja s tradicionalnimi množičnimi mediji delijo enake »novičarske vrednote«: poenostavitev problematik, emocionalizacijo, konflikt, »dirkaško« poročanje, personalizacijo in druge pripovedovalske tehnike (Strömbäck, 2008). Poleg tega kaže, da je moč trditi, da družbeni mediji krepijo te vrednote.

Drugi del teoretičnega okvira se osredotoča na fenomen personalizacije, pri čemer je personalizacija definirana kot naraščajoča pomembnost individualnosti politikov v procesih odločanja, vedenju volivcev in političnem komuniciranju (Holtz-Bacha in drugi, 2014). Personalizacija je tako konceptualizirana na treh različnih ravneh: kot personalizacija politične moči ali večanje koncentracije moči v rokah voditeljev; personalizacija mnenj volivcev, ki se udejani, ko volivci podprejo za stranko zaradi njenega voditelja; in nazadnje personalizacija političnega komuniciranja. Personalizacijo močno pogojujejo medijsko okolje, proces modernizacije in tip političnega sistema. Prihod televizije in komercializacija medijskega trga sta prispevala k rasti politike, osredotočene na kandidate. Modernizacija družbe je spodbudila poslabšanje družbenih vezi in rahljanje navezanosti na skupnost. Ker je med volilnim telesom strankarska lojalnost upadala, so morale politične stranke najti druge spodbude za nagovarjanje volivcev. Te so identificirale v kratkoročnih dejavnikih, kot so kandidati in njihove privlačne osebnosti. Tretje gonilo personalizacije je politični sistem določene države, ki naj bi oblikoval proces personalizacije. Adam in Maier (2010) denimo trdita, da so predsedniški sistemi po definiciji bolj personalizirani kot parlamentarni sistemi. Personalizacija političnega komuniciranja pa se je osredotočala predvsem na: a) povečano pozornost medijev do individualnih politikov na račun strank kot kolektivov, programov in tem, in b) vse večjo vidnost kandidatov v strateškem komuniciranju strank (Grbeša, 2010). V pričujoči študiji se podrobneje posvečam »strateški dimenziji« te zadnje ravni personalizacije, tj. analiziram, če in na kakšne načine politiki uporabljajo personalizacijo kot komunikacijsko strategijo na platformah družbenih omrežij. Bolj specifično, raziskava se ukvarja s konceptom privatizacije politike, ki je definirana kot pronicanje zasebnega v politično. Koncept opisuje brisanje mej med zasebnim in javnim tako na ravni medijev kot politike. Medije bolj kot politične ideje politikov vse bolj zanima zasebna plat njihovih življenj, hkrati pa politiki strateško uporabljajo zgodbe iz svoje zasebnosti, da pridobijo glasove in medijsko pozornost ter uveljavljajo svoje politične cilje. Privatizacija zavzame raznolike oblike, od subtilne »humanizacije« do eksplicitne uporabe družinskih članov in družinskih zadev v politične namene. Pogosto je

povezana s popularno kulturo, pri čemer se pri politiku poskuša ustvariti celostno zvezdniško agendo (Street, 2016). V tej raziskavi je popularizacija poleg privatizacije smatrana kot ena od poddimenzij personalizacije.

Tretji in zadnji del teoretskega okvirja je posvečen družbenim omrežjem, ki zaradi svojih lastnosti politično komunikacijo še dodatno personalizirajo (Ekman in Widhlof, 2014; Metz in drugi, 2019; Vergeer in drugi, 2013). Politiki imajo danes svoje komunikacijske kanale, na katerih se lahko predstavljajo, kot želijo, vključno s tem, da razkrijejo elemente iz osebnega in zasebnega življenja. Vendar raziskave kažejo, da se družbena omrežja še vedno primarno uporablja za komunikacijo političnih tem, stalne kampanje in vzpostavljanje agend. Slednja funkcija se je izvajala predvsem z uporabo funkcije objavljanja na družbenih omrežjih, medtem ko je bila funkcija interaktivnosti uporabljena redkeje (Enli in Skogerbø, 2013). Pojav politikov na družbenih medijih je še posebej prispeval k profesionalizaciji spletne komunikacije in volilnih kampanj (Kreiss, 2014; Stromer-Galley, 2014). A trendi na družbenih omrežjih se spreminjajo tako hitro, da je bilo potrebnih le nekaj let za spremembo komunikacijske paradigme od Obamove profesionalne spletne komunikacije s standardiziranimi sporočili in na raziskavah utemeljenimi metodami do Trumpovih besnih, »avtentičnih« tvitov, temelječih na »občutku v drobovju« (Enli, 2017). Profesionalizacija, vodenje stalnih kampanj, neformalnost, amaterstvo, avtentičnost, ki jim je sledila vse večja pomembnost logike družbenih omrežij in fenomen personalizacije, dobro povzamejo glavne trende sodobnega političnega komuniciranja, ki jih je spodbudila rast družbenih omrežij. Nazadnje se raziskava osredotoči na spletni angažma državljanov, pri čemer se naslanja na idejo, da imajo internet in še posebej družbeni mediji potencial približati politiko državljanom. Trdim, da lahko komentiranje političnih objav, »všečkanje« in deljenje političnih vsebin obravnavamo kot novo obliko spletnega angažmaja. Prav tako raziskava predpostavlja, da obstaja korelacija med personalizacijo (in njenimi poddimenzijami privatizacije in popularizacije) ter mero angažmaja.

Empirična analiza

Cilj te raziskave je bil proučiti, kako »hiter razvoj in razširitev družbenih omrežij vpliva na stopnjo personalizacije« (Rahat in Kenig, 2018, str. 137). Drugi cilj raziskave je bil raziskati, ali lahko zasebne in popularne objave, ki jih sporočajo posamezni politiki na spletnih platformah, delujejo tako, da spodbudijo državljanke k všečkanju, komentiranju in deljenju politikove Facebook strani. Upoštevajoč, da »študije fenomena politične personalizacije po

navadi izpostavljajo razlike v njeni stopnji med državami« (Rahat in Kenig, 2018, str. 137), sem želela proučiti personalizacijo v treh različnih državah – v ZDA, Veliki Britaniji in na Hrvaškem. Bolj specifično, raziskovala sem komunikacijo na Facebook straneh predsednika v predsedniškem sistemu – Baracka Obame v ZDA; premiera v parlamentarnem sistemu – Davida Camerona v Veliki Britaniji; in predsednika v parlamentarnem sistemu – Iva Josipovića na Hrvaškem. Za analizo sem izbrala omrežje Facebook, ker je bilo v času zasnove empirične študije najpopularnejše družbeno omrežje na svetu, kar ostaja še danes (Clement, 2019, avgust 2).

Večina raziskav, ki so se ukvarjale s personalizacijo političnega komuniciranja, je bila osredotočena na čas kampanj in volitev – obdobj, ko personalizacija ni nenavaden dogodek. V tej raziskavi sem poskušala analizirati, kako se personalizacija izvaja kot politična komunikacijska strategija preko družbenih medijev v daljšem časovnem obdobju in ne samo v času volitev.

Tradicionalni množični mediji s televizijo na prvem mestu so politikom »vzeli glas«, ko so »novinarji začeli interpretirati in parafrazirati njihove besede, pretežno v negativnem tonu« (Hallin, 1992). Namen te raziskave je bil proučiti, kaj politiki komunicirajo, ko imajo priložnost državljanom doseči neposredno z uporabo svojega glasu prek objav na družbenih omrežjih. Bolj specifično, raziskava se je osredotočala na pripravljenost političnih akterjev, da razkrijejo svojo zasebnost na družbenih omrežjih. Poleg tega sem v njej ugotavljala, ali personalizirane objave na Facebook straneh pritegnejo večjo pozornost državljanov, ki je izražena s številom »všečkov«, »delitev« in »komentarjev«. Personalizacija je na tem mestu konceptualizirana na dveh različnih ravneh: 1. kot del politične komunikacijske strategije političnih akterjev, in 2. kot spodbuda/stimulacija za angažma državljanov na spletu.

Upoštevajoč, da imajo lahko drugačne politične in medijske kulture specifičen vpliv na lastnosti in intenzivnost personalizacije, sem za proučevanje le-te na prvi ravni izbrala tri različne države: ZDA, Veliko Britanijo in Hrvaško. Teza personalizacije je bila dobro razdelana v kontekstu zahodnih demokracij, predvsem Velike Britanije in ZDA (Dalton in Wattenberg, 2000; Langer, 2011; Karvonen, 2010; Rahat in Koenig, 2018; Stanyer, 2013; Thompson, 2000; Webb in Poguntke, 2012), medtem ko so študije personalizacije v kontekstu postkomunističnih držav, kot je Hrvaška, redke (Grbeša, 2008; 2010; Šimunjak, 2014). Poleg tega večina teh študij obravnava personalizacijo kot povečano medijsko pozornost namenjeno individualnemu

politiku, strateška dimenzija personalizacije pa je proučevana manj pogosto. Tako je bil namen te študije pregledati, kako je fenomen personalizacije politične komunikacije manifestiran v dveh razvitih Zahodnih demokracijah – v ZDA in Veliki Britaniji – in eni postkomunistični državi – na Hrvaškem – v nadzorovanem medijskem okolju na najbolj popularni družbeni platformi, Facebooku (Statista, oktober 2019). V ta namen sem proučevala Facebook objave na straneh nekdanjega predsednika ZDA Baracka Obame, nekdanjega premiera Velike Britanije Davida Camerona in nekdanjega predsednika Hrvaške Iva Josipovića. Izbrani podatki so primerni za primerjavo na ravni Facebook komunikacije zaradi več razlogov:¹⁸ analiza vsebine Facebook objav je bila v vseh treh primerih opravljena z uporabo istega sistema kodiranja; časovni okvir analiziranih objav v vseh treh primerih zajema obdobje od leta 2013 do 2015, v primeru Obame in Josipovića pa je časovno prekrivanje še daljše (od leta 2010 do 2015); prav tako so bili v času raziskave vsi trije politiki v svojem drugem mandatu. Za testiranje personalizacije na drugi predlagani ravni, kot spodbude za interakcije uporabnikov Facebooka, sem v analizo objav vključila število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev.

Pričujoča disertacija je izhajala iz treh glavnih raziskovalnih vprašanj. RV1 in RV2 se nanašata na personalizacijo, privatizacijo in popularizacijo na Facebook straneh izbranih politikov na ravni komunikacijske strategije, medtem ko poskuša RV3 ugotoviti, kaj državljane spodbuja k všečkanju, komentiranju in deljenju objav ter do katere mere je mogoče njihov angažma razložiti z osebnimi lastnostmi, ki jih politik sporoča v svojih objavah.

RV1: Kakšne so bile značilnosti in intenziteta personalizacije na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića?

RV2: Kako so bile za komunikacijo na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića uporabljene zasebne in popularne lastnosti?

RV3: Katere značilnosti personalizacije, uporabljene na Facebooku Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića, so spodbujale in katere odvrčale uporabnike k angažmaju?

¹⁸ Razlogi za izbor teh primerov se do neke mere naslanjajo na Šimunjakovo raziskovanje (2014, 2017), v katerem avtor primerja personalizacijo politične komunikacije v dnevnikih časopisih v Jugoslaviji, na Hrvaškem in v Veliki Britaniji. Šimunjak je personalizacijo v izbranih državah primerjal na ravni pojave voditeljev v časopisnih člankih, v podobnih časovnih obdobjih, z uporabo podobnih metod vzorčenja in z uporabo indikatorjev poročanja, osredotočenega na osebo, ki so bili aplicirani v študiji britanskega primera (za več podrobnosti glej Šimunjak, 2014, str. 209).

Empirična analiza je bila razdeljena na tri dele. Prvi del analize je zajemal značilnosti in intenzivnost personalizacije na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića. Drugi del je poskušal odgovoriti, kako so bile na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića uporabljene zasebne in popularne lastnosti. Tretji del je želel razkriti, katere značilnosti komunikacije, uporabljene na Facebooku Obame, Camerona in Josipovića, so spodbujale in katere odvrčale uporabnike k angažmaju, ki je izražen v številu všečkov, komentarjev in delitev.

Da bi odgovorila na ta vprašanja, sem uporabila kvantitativni raziskovalni načrt. Končni vzorec je vključeval 2804 objav, objavljenih med leti 2008 in 2016 na strani Baracka Obame, 1317 objav iz obdobja 2013–2016 s strani Davida Camerona in 850 objav s strani Iva Josipovića med leti 2010 in 2015. Analizirane objave predstavljajo celotno število javno dostopnih objav na posameznih Facebook straneh v izbranih obdobjih. Uporabljena raziskovalna metoda je bila kvantitativna analiza vsebine, za analizo podatkov pa opisna in inferenčna statistika. Kvantitativno analizo vsebine sem uporabila za pregled objav, deskriptivno statistiko za kvalitativen opis in povzemanje podatkov. Analiza vsebine je bila uporabljena, ker je utemeljena predvsem v štetju in merjenju kvantitete elementov, hkrati pa posveča precej pozornosti »vrsti, 'kvaliteti' in 'razlikam' v tekstu, še preden se zgodi kakršnakoli kvantifikacija« (Bauer, 2000, str. 132). Za iskanje odgovora na tretje raziskovalno vprašanje sem uporabila OLS (Ordinary Least Square; metoda najmanjših kvadratov) regresijsko analizo. OLS regresija omogoča sočasno analizo vpliva multiplih neodvisnih spremenljivk na stalno odvisno spremenljivko (Petz in drugi, 2012). Z drugimi besedami: z regresijsko analizo sem identificirala pomembne odnose med komunikacijskimi lastnostmi v Obamovih, Cameronovih in Josipovićeveh objavah ter številom všečkov, komentarjev in delitev državljanov.

Seznam uporabljenih spremenljivk oz. pripadajoča kodirna knjiga je temeljila na predhodnih delih avtorjev, kot so Kaid in Johnston (2001), Grbeša (2010), Wattenberg (1991) ter Wilke in Reinemann (2001). Vsebovala je 24 kategorij in 108 vrednosti, ki so bile razdeljene v tri glavne sklope. Prvi sklop se je ukvarjal s personalizacijo in politično vsebino v objavah ter poskušal razkriti, ali so bile posamezne objave osredotočene pretežno na problematike ali na političen in zaseben profil političnih akterjev. Objave so bile kodirane za prisotnost in posledično dominanco določenih vsebin vključno s: poudarkom na voditelju in njegovem političnem ali zasebnem profilu; vsebino, povezano s temami, različnimi dominantnimi strategijami (Kaid in

Johnston, 2001, str. 18), tipom objave, pozivi k akciji. V tem kontekstu sem preko objav, ki so vsebovale fotografije, proučevala tudi Obamovo, Cameronovo in Josipovićevo vidnost, ki je bila obravnavana kot splošni indikator personalizacije.

Drugi del kodirne knjige je bil najbolj obsežen in je vseboval vprašanja, povezana z različnimi indikatorji privatizacije. Ta je bila proučevana glede na tri cilje privatizacije, povzete po Holtz-Bachine (2004, str. 45–46): humanizacijo, emocionalizacijo in prizadevanje za zvezdniški status. Različne kontekste, v katerih so se pojavili Obama, Cameron in Josipović, je bilo moč brati kot en indikator humanizacije. Drugi je bil pojavljanje običajnih državljanov v njihovih objavah, ki so bile razumljene kot poskusi politikov, da dajejo videz dostopnosti in povezanosti z ljudstvom. Tretji indikator humanizacije so bila nanašanja na zasebno, specifično na družinsko življenje. Emocionalizacija je bila proučevana preko prisotnosti čustvenih pozivov v objavah. Da bi analizirala tretji cilj privatizacije, prizadevanje za zvezdniški status, sem objave kodirala glede na prisotnost referiranja na popularno kulturo in pojavljanje zvezdnikov v objavljenih fotografijah.

Tretji del analize je bil namenjen ugotavljanju, kaj spodbudi angažma državljanov na Facebooku in kateri elementi objav delujejo kot spodbude za všečkanje, komentiranje in deljenje politikove strani. Ta del je bil posvečen tudi vprašanju, do katere mere je mogoče angažma državljanov na Obamovi, Cameronovi in Josipovićevi strani razložiti z zasebnimi in popularnimi objavami, ki jih komunicirajo preko svojih strani. Ta odsek analize je bil opravljen z uporabo izbranih kategorij, ki sem jih pridobila preko analize vsebine, ter števila všečkov, komentarjev in deljenj, ki sem jih s pomočjo programskega jezika Python pridobila iz analiziranih objav. Da bi odgovorila na začetno raziskovalno vprašanje in ugotovila, ali imajo nekatere spremenljivke pojasnjevalno moč za predvidevanje števila všečkov, komentarjev in delitev, sem za Obamo, Camerona in Josipovića oblikovala OLS regresijski model. Čeprav Facebook upravljajo komunikacijske ekipe in/ali voditelji sami, kar pomeni, da je mogoče komentarje odstraniti, da je mogoče nekatere objave bolje promovirati z uporabo Facebookovih oglasov itd., je ta raziskava še vedno relevantna na ravni komunikacijske strategije, saj pokaže, kako politiki personalizacijo uporabljajo kot specifično strategijo. Prav tako je raziskovanje interaktivnosti, kljub možnim pristranskostim, še vedno indicacija preferenc uporabnikov Facebooka, ko gre za všečkanje, komentiranje in deljenje določenih vsebin.

Če povzamem, je bila tukajšnja raziskava načrtovana z namenom doprinosa k obstoječim študijam personalizacije na družbenih omrežjih (Bronstein, 2013; Enli, 2017; Enli in Skogerbø, 2013; Kruikemeier, Van Noort, Vliegenthart in De Vreese, 2013; Metz, Kruikemeier in Lecheler, 2019; Lalancette in Raynauld, 2019). Institucionalna dimenzija personalizacije sicer ni bila v središču pričujoče raziskave, čeprav je nastopala kot pomemben dejavnik pri izboru primerov za empirično analizo. Vedenjska dimenzija personalizacije je bila do neke mere proučevana s pregledom interakcij državljanov na straneh politikov. Družbeni mediji uporabnikom omogočajo, da stopajo v interakcije na različne načine, s komentiranjem, všečkanjem, deljenjem, objavljanjem itd. Splošno je sprejeto, da lahko internet poveča politični angažma državljanov s tem, ko jim približa politiko in jim zagotovi nove oblike participacije (Coleman, 2009; Tolbert in McNeal, 2003).

V delu je bila personalizacija analizirana kot spletna politična komunikacijska strategija in kot stimulacija za angažma uporabnikov Facebooka. Proučila sem različne dimenzije personalizacije, in kako so le-te uporabljene kot taktike. Pregled je pokazal, katere od teh dimenzij personalizacije so imele največji potencial za spodbudo angažmaja. Metodološki pristop in raziskovalni načrt sta bila vzpostavljena za ugotavljanje značilnosti in moči personalizacije politikov na Facebooku ter kot potenciala privatizacije in popularizacije za spodbujanje angažmaja.

Ugotovitve in diskusija: personalizacija na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića

Prvi del te sekcije je posvečen odgovoru na prvo raziskovalno vprašanje, tj. kakšne so bile značilnosti in intenziteta personalizacije na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića? Drugi del odgovarja na drugo raziskovalno vprašanje: kako so bile za komunikacijo na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića uporabljene zasebne in popularne lastnosti? S pregledom rezultatov analize vsebine objav z vseh treh strani sem želela pokazati, kateri indikatorji zasebnega in popularnega, ki so se pojavili v njihovih objavah, so bili najpogosteje uporabljeni in na kakšne načine. Tretji del opisuje rezultate modelov regresijske analize in poskuša odgovoriti na tretje raziskovalno vprašanje: katere značilnosti personalizacije, uporabljene na Facebooku Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića, so spodbujale in katere odvrčale uporabnike k angažmaju?

Značilnosti in intenziteta personalizacije

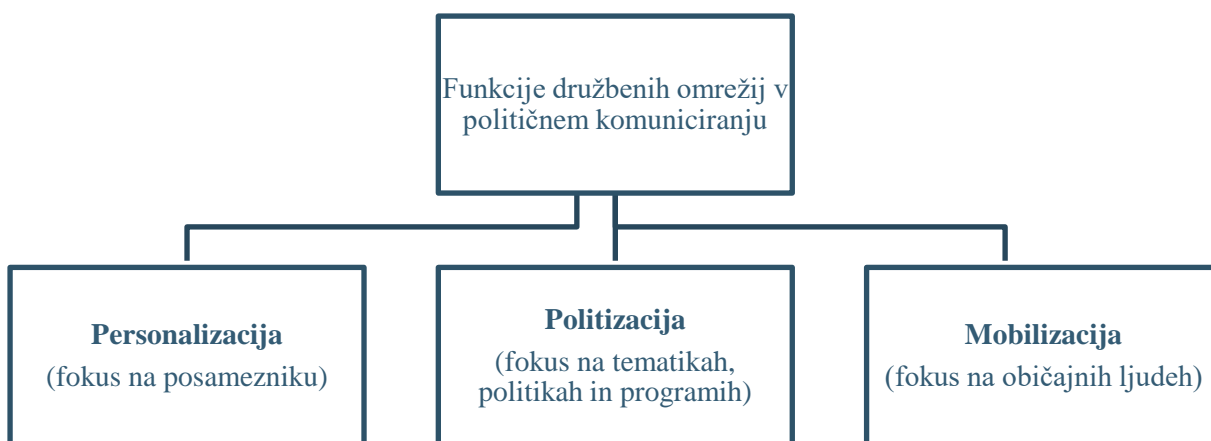
Predstavljeni rezultati v tem delu odgovarjajo na prvo raziskovalno vprašanje. Analiza se začne z rezultati splošnega fokusa in tematik, ki so se pojavile v objavah na Facebook straneh treh proučevanih politikov. Nadalje razkriva, kakšne so bile prevladujoče strategije politikov v komunikaciji prek Facebooka, kako pogosto so pozvali k akciji in kakšni so bili prevladujoči tipi objav na njihovih straneh. Ta sklop ugotovitev odgovarja tudi na to, kako pogosto so se politiki v svojih objavah pojavili sami (»vidnost«). Vidnost politikov je služila kot splošni indikator personalizacije.

Značilnosti in intenziteta personalizacije izbranih primerov so bile proučevane z uporabo različnih indikatorjev, ki so bili oblikovani na eni strani za identifikacijo zasebnih vsebin na objavah in političnih vsebin na drugi strani. Glede na diferenciacijo med podobo in temami v politični komunikaciji, ki jo opišeta Kaid in Johnston (2002), je bilo prvo vprašanje v kodirni knjigi povezano s »splošnim fokusom« objav, ki so razkrile, da so bili politični in zasebni profili redko v središču komunikacije Obame, Camerona in Josipovića (zasebni profil¹⁹ je bil v središču v skoraj 13 % vseh pregledanih objav v Obamovem primeru, in le v 3,5 % Cameronovih in v okoli 4 % Josipovićeveh objav). Vendar pa je bila vidnost politikov na fotografijah – še en indikator personalizacije – visoka: pojavili so se na več kot polovici pregledanih objav, ki so vsebovale fotografijo (51,45 % Obamovih, 67,83 % Cameronovih in 66,84 % Josipovićeveh objav). Pregled splošnega fokusa objav je nadalje pokazal, da je bil poudarek le-teh na različnih tematikah (v 54 % objav na Obamovi strani, v 67 % Cameronovih objav in 42 % Josipovićeveh objav). Prav tako so bile v središču objav vseh treh politikov pogosto vodenja kampanj in različna obvestila (kampanje v 16,22 % in obvestila v 9,27 % v Obamovih objavah, kampanje v 7,33 % in obvestila v 17,27 % na Cameronovi strani in v Josipovićevelem primeru kampanje v 33,7 % in obvestila v 15,81 % pregledanih objav). Kategorije kot »dominantna strategija«, »tip objave«, »poziv k akciji« so pokazale, da se je komunikacija na Facebooku pogosto osredotočala na običajne državljane, ki so bili vključeni v aktivnosti, povezane s kampanjo (v skoraj 30 % Obamovih, 26 % Cameronovih in 34 % Josipovićeveh objav), a je bila obenem povezana z različnimi tematikami, predvsem v Obamovem in Cameronovem primeru.

¹⁹ Zasebni profil na tem mestu označuje skupek političnega in zasebnega profila v »splošnem fokusu« objave.

Izsledki vendarle kažejo, da so se politiki na omrežju Facebook primarno osredotočali na tematike, nato v manjši meri na državljane, nazadnje pa nase. Fokus na tematike bi bilo mogoče pogojno označiti za »politizacijsko funkcijo družbenih omrežij«, osredotočenost na državljane kot »mobilizacijsko funkcijo družbenih omrežij«, tretjo, najmanj uporabljeno funkcijo, pa kot »personalizacijsko funkcijo družbenih omrežij« (Slika 1). Največja razlika se pokaže, ko pogledamo tretjo predlagano funkcijo, ki je bila najpogosteje uporabljena na Obamovi strani, medtem ko sta jo Cameron in Josipović uporabljala redko. Cameronova in Obamova Facebook stran sta se tematikam pretežno posvečali v strogem pomenu besede (politike, programi ipd.), na Josipovićevi strani pa so bile najbolj dominantne kampanje in obvestila.

Slika 1: Funkcije družbenih omrežij v političnem komuniciranju



Vir: Avtoričin lastni prispevek.

Personalizacija politične komunikacije na Facebook straneh Obame, Camerona in Josipovića torej ni bila intenzivna. Vseeno je bila prisotna, manifestirana predvsem preko fotografij izbranih politikov v objavah. Prav tako so se v izbranih primerih pokazale razlike med značilnostmi personalizacije, kar razkriva, da so politiki želeli poslati drugačna sporočila. Obama je uporabljal različne fotografije in raznolika prizorišča. Fotografije so bile največkrat profesionalne in retuširane ter dajale močan vtis, da imamo opravka s svetovnim voditeljem, ki mu je mar za okolje, človekove pravice in blagostanje vseh ameriških državljanov. Prav tako je bil predstavljen kot družinski človek. Cameron je bil na drugi strani predstavljen v vlogi človeka, ki trdo dela v prid izboljšanja ekonomije in varnosti britanskih državljanov. Josipović se je na fotografijah večinoma pojavil v kontekstu predsedniških ceremonialnih dolžnosti in v

kontekstu kampanj za drugi mandat. Želel je dati vtis dostopnega predsednika, ki deluje med državljani.

Zasebno in popularno na različnih ravneh

Drugo raziskovalno vprašanje se je ukvarjalo s tem, kako so bile na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića uporabljene zasebne in popularne lastnosti. V ta namen sem pregledala različne cilje privatizacije, kot jih definira Holtz-Bacha (2004): humanizacijo, emocionalizacijo in prizadevanje za zvezdniški status. Indikatorji humanizacije so bili: prisotnost običajnih ljudi v objavah, vidnost družinskih članov v fotografijah in nanašanje na družinsko življenje ter druge vidike zasebnega, npr. hobije, otroštvo, najljubšo hrano, knjige, TV oddaje, glasbo.

Ugotovitve kažejo, da je bila v primeru objav Baracka Obame in Iva Josipovića uporaba običajnih ljudi pogosta in najbolj prevladujoča strategija (20,65 % in 34,07 %). Ti so bili pogostokrat prisotni v objavah vseh treh politikov in vsi trije so se velikokrat tudi fotografirali na način, da bi pustili vtis preprostih ljudi med »enakovrednimi«. A vsi trije politiki so bili hkrati zelo zadržani pri razkrivanju svojega zasebnega življenja. Obamovi družinski člani se na fotografijah pojavijo le v 7,39 % vseh objav, Cameronovi v samo 2 %, Josipovići pa zgolj v 1,59 % objav na Facebook strani. Cameron je omenjal svoje hobije, najljubšo glasbo ipd. najredkeje, v manj kot 1 % objav. Josipović je uporabil druge zasebne lastnosti kot družinske v 5,5 % primerov, Obama v manj kot 5 % objav.

Na drugi strani je bila emocionalizacija uporabljena velikokrat tako v Obamovih objavah (v več kot 64 % primerov), kot tudi na Cameronovi (okoli 64 % objav) in Josipovići strani (v 72 % objav). Obami je uspelo svojo spletno komunikacijo emocionalizirati predvsem z uporabo čustveno nabitih fotografij, pogosto opremljenih s citati z izjemno čustvenimi besedami. Cameron je bil večkrat emocionalen v svojih izjavah glede ekonomije in je nemalokrat zvenel navdušen nad pozitivnimi rezultati, vendar tudi jezen glede tematik povezanih z Brexitom ali laburistično stranko. Svojo Facebook stran je večkrat uporabil za izkazovanje sožalja ob svetovnih tragedijah (npr. ob terorističnem napadu v Parizu, vojni v Siriji, poplavah) in družinam ob smrtih politikov. Josipovići emocionalni odzivi so bili povezani pretežno s kampanjo, grajenjem podobe entuziazma in motiviranjem državljanov, da se mu pridružijo na poti k bolj »pravični« Hrvški. Izsledki podpirajo idejo, da so družbena omrežja

emocionalizirala politično komunikacijo na podoben način, kot jo je pred desetletji televizija (Hart, 1998; Meyrowitz, 1985).

Naslednja naloga je bila določiti, v kolikšni meri politiki uporabljajo reference na popularno kulturo in kako pogosto se v objavljenih fotografijah na njihovih straneh pojavijo zvezdniki. Ugotovitve so bile nekoliko nepričakovane in so razkrile, da je bila popularna kultura na Facebook straneh Obame, Camerona in Josipovića omenjena redko. Josipović jo je referiral največkrat (v 8 % objav), Cameron v 6 % in Obama v manj kot 3 % vseh objav. Josipović je popularno kulturo pretežno uporabljal za samopromocijo, Cameron in Obama pa za opozarjanje na določene tematike.

Slika 2: Stopnje privatizacije na družabnih omrežjih politikov



Vir: Avtoričin lastni prispevek.

Glede na izsledke sem konstruirala kategorizacijo različnih ravni privatizacije: nizko, srednjo in visoko (Slika 2). Nizka raven privatizacije se nanaša na pojav družinskih članov v formalnih političnih kontekstih. Ta raven je bila vidna v vseh treh primerih. O srednji stopnji privatizacije govorimo takrat, ko politiki uporabijo reference na svoja zasebna življenja (hobije, otroštvo, izobrazbo, navade) ali popularno kulturo. To raven je največ uporabljal Ivo Josipović, Cameron pa se je posluževal najmanj pogosto. Tretja raven privatizacije se zgodi takrat, ko politiki govorijo o družinskih članih v neformalnih kontekstih, kadar delijo intimne trenutke s svojo družino, ali so v tesnem stiku z družinskimi člani (jih objemajo, držijo za roke, poljublajo) in

eksczesivno kažejo čustva. Ta tip privatizacije je bil viden predvsem v Obamovem primeru, v nekaj objavah pri Davidu Cameronu, ko je poljubil ženo Samantha ali nosil njuno hčer. Nekdanji hrvaški predsednik Josipović ni te stopnje privatizacije uporabil nikoli.

Kako razložiti razlike v intenziteti privatizacije med izbranimi političnimi akterji? Ena od možnih razlag je ta, da je bila privatizacija uporabljena za različne cilje. Obama jo je uporabljal za samopromocijo, Cameron za promocijo določenih tematik, Josipović pa je razkrival elemente zasebnega življenja predvsem za namene kampanje. Druga interpretacija je povezana z razlikami v proučevanih političnih kulturah (Swanson in Mancini, 1996, str. 262). Medtem ko je za britanske politike pomemben prikaz retoričnih sposobnosti in prodorne inteligence, morajo ameriški politiki pokazati, da z volivci delijo čustva o pomembnih temah (prav tam). Avtorji prav tako opozarjajo, da je v visoko personalizirani naravi ameriškega političnega sistema za politike običajno, da razkrivajo elemente svojih zasebnih življenj in se pojavljajo z družinskimi člani v zasebnih kontekstih (Holtz-Bacha, 2004; McAllistar, 2015). Na drugi strani Grbeša trdi, da na Hrvaškem zasebno ostaja »preveč zasebno« zaradi ostankov »let socialističnega režima, v katerem je bilo politično strogo ločeno od zasebnega« (2010, str. 75–76). Tretja razlaga leži v specifikah vsakega od kandidatov in razlikah v kontekstih. Barack Obama je bil glede na vse značilnosti idealen kandidat za izvajanje tehnik privatizacije in popularizacije na družbenih omrežjih. Leta 2008 je bil novinec in zato še bolj nagnjen k obema procesoma, saj volivci o njem niso vedeli veliko. Predhodne študije so potrdile, da je bila Obamova komunikacija na družbenih omrežjih personalizirana (Bimber, 2014; Bronstein, 2013; Gerodimos in Justinussen, 2015). Vendar je večina raziskav analizirala personalizacijo v času volilnih kampanj, v tej študiji pa postane jasno, da je bila personalizacija kot spletna komunikacijska strategija med njegovima dvema mandatoma uporabljena le do določene mere in da je bila ta vrsta komunikacije osredotočena zgolj na določene tematike, medtem ko je bila privatizacija preko zasebnega življenja uporabljena redko. V Veliki Britaniji je stopnja privatizacije odvisna od značilnosti kandidatov (Langer, 2009). Blair je zasebno denimo velikokrat uporabljal v javne namene, njegov naslednik Gordon Brown pa je imel do tehnik privatizacije v politiki nelagodni odnos (Langer, 2011). Hkrati pa Langer ugotavlja, da David Cameron podobno kot Tony Blair ni okleval pri uporabi zasebnih lastnosti v kampanji ter da je bil v tem dober, ker je bil mlad, karizmatičen in neformalen (prav tam). Tako je ugotovitev, da je Cameron svojo zasebnost na Facebooku uporabljal skromno, presenetljiva, sploh zato, ker je sam zagovarjal stališče, da mora politik, da pridobi zaupanje volivcev, razkriti svojo zasebno plat. Novinarju časopisa *The Sun* je denimo dovolil, da z njim preživi dan v uradni rezidenci na

ulici Downing Street 10, in pred kamerami razkril, kako se njegov dan začne in konča. Kljub temu pa analiza njegove Facebook strani razkrije, da je bila privatizacija verjetno strategija, rezervirana bolj za tradicionalne medije. Dodatna možna razlaga je ta, da so bile v disertaciji analizirane le objave od leta 2013 naprej, s tem pa raziskava ni pokrila njegove kampanje leta 2010, v kateri je tekmoval kot politični novinec. Vendar pa dejstvo, da leta 2010 sploh še ni imel svoje Facebook strani, namiguje, da mu je bila komunikacija preko platforme vsiljena, in takšen vtis pušča tudi njegova stran.

Privatizacija na Hrvaškem je bila močno povezana s strategijo samega kandidata. Najpogosteje je bila uporabljena v drugem krogu volitev leta 2010, ko je Josipović kandidiral proti Milanu Bandiću. Vendar pa raziskave kažejo, da je bil Josipović celo takrat precej zadržan do razkrivanja zasebnega življenja medijem (Šimunjak, 2012). Analiza njegove Facebook strani je razkrila, da se je ta trend nadaljeval tekom njegovega mandata. Josipović pa se je vseeno občasno do neke mere posluževal referenc na popularno kulturo, da bi pritegnil volivce.

Spodbude in zaviralci angažmaja državljanov na Facebooku

Tretji del empirične raziskave je bil vzpostavljen za odgovarjanje na vprašanje, katere komunikacijske značilnosti na Facebook straneh Baracka Obame, Davida Camerona in Iva Josipovića so imele pozitiven ali negativen vpliv na angažma državljanov, merjen s številom všečkov, komentarjev in delitev. Ta del analize sem izvedla z uporabo izbranih kategorij, ki sem jih pridobila iz analize vsebine in števila všečkov, komentarjev in delitev vsake pregledane objave. Izbrane spremenljivke in število interakcij so bili vključeni v različne regresijske modele, prilagojene za vsak primer posebej (za povzetek učinkov glej Sliko 3). Predpostavljala sem, da bodo objave z zasebnimi in popularnimi lastnostmi imele najmočnejši pozitivni učinek na število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev. Izsledki so v vseh treh primerih pokazali, da so bile spodbude za angažma državljanov na Facebooku zelo čustvene objave. Prav tako je analiza razkrila, da so v Obamovem primeru imele pozitiven učinek objave, povezane s problematiko pravic manjšin, v Cameronovem primeru pa tematike, povezane z Brexitom in varnostjo. Negativen učinek na število interakcij s strani državljanov je v vseh treh primerih imela prisotnost običajnih ljudi na fotografiji, saj so uporabnike Facebooka odvrnili od všečkanja, komentiranja in deljenja. V Cameronovem primeru so imele negativen vpliv na število interakcij tudi tematike, povezane z ekonomijo in prisotnost zvezdnikov na fotografijah.

Ugotovitve glede pozitivnih učinkov sklicevanja na čustva v objavah podpirajo rezultate zadnje študije Manon Metz in drugih (2019), ki so z aplikacijo obsežnega konceptualnega modela različnih tipov samopersonalizacije ugotovili, da je v Nemčiji emocionalna in zasebna samopersonalizacija pozitivno vplivala na angažma občinstva. Isti rezultat je pokazala študija Obamove volilne kampanje leta 2012, za katero je bilo ugotovljeno, da je »emotivni jezik dominiral večino kampanje na Facebooku v letu 2012, bil uporabljen v več kot polovici objav in vzniknil kot ena od treh najpomembnejših spremenljivk za angažma državljanov« (Gerodimos in Justinussen, 2015, str. 126).

Slika 3: Primerjava statistično pomembnih učinkov spremenljivk na interakcije političnih voditeljev na Facebooku

Spremenljivke	Predvideni učinki	Opaženi učinki		
		Obama	Cameron	Josipović
Politični kontekst				
Tematike v splošnem fokusu	-	/	/	+
Ekonomске tematike	-	/	--	/
Brexit	-	x	+++	x
Varnostne tematike	-	/	+	/
Pravice manjšin	/	+++	/	/
Pozivi k akciji	+	/	--	/
Personalizacija				
Voditelj na fotografiji	+	+++	/	-
Politični profil	+	+	/	/
Privatizacija				
Zasebno življenje v splošnem fokusu	+	++	/	++
Družinski člani	+	+++	+++	/
Običajni ljudje	+	---	---	--
Emocionalizacija				
Emocionalni pozivi	+	+++	++	+
Popularna kultura				
Popularna kultura	+	/	+	/
Fotografije zvezdnikov	+	/	---	++
Tehnični elementi				
Fotografija	+	/	++	/

Vir: Avtoričini lastni izračuni.

Legenda: / brez statistično pomembnega učinka; x se ne nanaša na primer; + pozitivni učinek na enega od treh tipov interakcije (všeček, komentar ali delitev); ++ pozitivni učinek na dve različni interakciji; +++ pozitivni učinek na vsečke, komentarje in delitve; - negativni učinek na enega od treh tipov interakcij; -- negativni učinek na dva tipa interakcij; --- negativni učinek na vsečke, komentarje in delitve

Čeprav je bila privatizacija uporabljena poredko, je bil angažma državljanov največji pri objavah, ki so vsebovale reference na družinska življenja (nanašanje na družinske člane) in druge vidike zasebnih življenj politikov (hobije, najljubšo hrano, glasbo). Metz in drugi so poskušali pojasniti podobne rezultate v Nemčiji: »Ta zahteva občinstva po več zasebnih vtisih

javnih figur je v skladu z dokumentirano rastjo novinarskega zanimanja za zasebna življenja politikov (Ekman in Widholm, 2014, citirano v Metz in drugi, 2019, str. 11). Glede na te izsledke je mogoče zaključiti, da privatizacijo primarno poganjajo državljani in da politiki nad deljenjem svoje zasebnosti niso najbolj navdušeni, razen če jih spodbudi, da to storijo z namenom pridobivanja pozornosti državljanov.

Dodatna zanimiva ugotovitev analize je, da je imela prisotnost običajnih ljudi na objavljeni fotografiji v vseh treh primerih statistično pomemben negativni učinek na število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev. To je bilo nepričakovano, saj je ena od predpostavk bila, da bo prisotnost običajnih ljudi na fotografijah spodbudila angažma. Rezultat je mogoče delno pripisati pojavu običajnih ljudi v okviru kampanjskih pričevanj na Facebooku, ki jih lahko ljudje smatrajo za »umetne« ali »neavtentične«, a izsledki vseeno kažejo, da državljani očitno ne cenijo običajnih ljudi na straneh politikov.

Nadaljnja presenetljiva ugotovitev je, da je imela prisotnost zvezdnikov na objavljenih fotografijah pozitiven učinek na število všečkov in delitev le v Josipovičevem primeru. Na Obamovi strani niso imeli zvezdniki nikakršnega učinka, na Cameronovi pa so objave z zvezdniki zanimivo zabeležile precej manjše število všečkov, komentarjev in delitev kot ostale fotografije. Treba pa je poudariti, da so se zvezdniki na Obamovi in Cameronovi strani navadno pojavili kot zagovorniki specifične tematike. To lahko pomeni, da državljani zvezdniki takrat, ko se pojavijo v odnosu do resne problematike, ne zanimajo. Interesirajo jih njihova zasebna življenja in intima, glamur, slava in njihovi nastopi. Z drugimi besedami: izsledki mogoče kažejo, da ljudi bolj zanima nova partnerka Leonarda DiCapria kot njegov boj proti klimatskim spremembam.

Zaključek

Kaj nam torej ti rezultati sporočajo o odnosu med družbenimi mediji in personalizacijo? S kombiniranjem teoretskih in empiričnih orodij je raziskava potrdila določene izsledke predhodnikov, ki so pokazali, da je politična komunikacija na Facebooku do neke mere personalizirana, primarno zaradi logike družbenih omrežij, tj. tehnološke arhitekture, pravil in norm platforme. Raziskava pa je nadalje pokazala, da personalizacija zavzema raznolike oblike in da je vidnost v nasprotju s privatizacijo pogosto uporabljena kot strategija proučevanih politikov.

Prav tako sem pokazala, da ima privatizacija različne ravni. Nizka raven privatizacije je bila v vseh treh primerih zelo pogosta, srednja stopnja redka, visoko stopnjo pa je bilo moč najti le v kontekstu ZDA, tj. na Facebook strani Baracka Obame. Ta rezultat je bil pričakovan, ker imajo ZDA predsedniški sistem ter politično in medijsko kulturo, ki je nagnjena k privatizaciji. Izsledki nakazujejo, da na značilnosti in intenziteto privatizacije v veliki meri vpliva kontekst določene države, političnega sistema, politične in medijske kulture, specifičnega volilnega sistema in značilnosti političnega akterja. Z drugimi besedami: mogoče je trditi, da so vidnost politikov, emocionalizacija in humanizacija tehnike, ki so na Facebooku uporabljene pogosto, medtem ko je visoka raven privatizacije odvisna bolj od konteksta.

Študija prav tako kaže, da je Facebook priročna platforma za vzpostavljanje agende in stalno vodenje kampanje. Proučevani politiki so ga namreč primarno uporabljali za komunikacijo o izbranih tematikah. Konec koncev pa so družbena omrežja državljanom omogočila, da se približajo politikom; da se vključujejo na njihove spletne strani, jih komentirajo, o njih diskutirajo, jih všečkajo, delijo, nanje reagirajo. Izsledki raziskave vendarle kažejo, da državljani raje všečkajo, delijo in komentirajo tiste objave, ki vsebujejo zasebne in emocionalne elemente, kar namiguje na to, da državljani politike dojemajo kot zvezdnike, sami pa se obnašajo kot oboževalci. Podobno kot radi všečkajo, komentirajo in delijo informacije, povezane z družino, hobiji in intimo filmskih zvezd, jih zanima tudi zasebno življenje politikov.

Če povzamem: disertacija je gradila na ideji, da so nove komunikacijske platforme omogočile nove oblike prezentacije in samopredstavljanja, ter pokazala, da fenomen personalizacije ni viden le na Facebooku, temveč ga oblikujeta tudi interaktivna logika in javna dostopnost platforme. Rezultati raziskave podpirajo idejo, da lahko čustvena privlačnost in nanašanja na zasebno in družinsko življenje pritegnejo večjo pozornost državljanov, ki se je v tem primeru merila s številom všečkov, komentarjev in delitev, kar odpira nova in zanimiva vprašanja o naravi sodobnih političnih komunikacijskih procesov.

Znanstvena relevantnost disertacije

Namen te študije je bil dekonstruirati tehnike in razdelati prevladujoče vzorce personalizacije skozi spletne komunikacijske strategije političnih akterjev. Podobne raziskave so analizirale videooglasne in pri tem poudarjale, da njihova »novinarsko nemediirana narava« nudi

najjasnejše dokaze o tem, kako se stranke/kandidati odločijo predstavljati množicam volivcev (Scammell in Langer, 2006, str. 764). Vendar pa so videooglasilni navadno le orodja volilnih kampanj, prisotnost personalizacije pa v tem obdobju ni nič nenavadnega. Raziskava je proučevala spletno komunikacijo na platformi, na kateri lahko politični akterji komunicirajo kontinuirano in na način, ki ni novinarsko mediiran. Doslej so personalizacijo v daljših časovnih obdobjih in ne le v času kampanj raziskovale le redke študije. (Sorensen, 2016; Metz in drugi, 2019). Podrobnejši pregled polja pa kaže, da ne obstaja nobena primerljiva raziskava, ki bi vključevala tako predsedniške kot tudi premierske mandate in njihove kampanje.

Pomemben doprinos disertacije je povezan z izborom držav za analizo. Poleg razlik v političnih in medijskih sistemih imajo ZDA, Velika Britanija in Hrvaška izrazito drugačen odnos do zasebnosti: v ZDA je deljenje zasebne perspektive in vsebin bolj normalizirano (Metz in drugi, 2019) kot na Hrvaškem ali v Veliki Britaniji, kjer raziskave kažejo, da je manifestacija fenomena odvisna predvsem od karakteristik kandidata (Langer, 2009). Podobne študije personalizacije spletnih okolij so vključevale pretežno posamezne države (Metz in drugi, 2019), ZDA (Gerodimos in Justinussen, 2015), Madžarsko (Bene, 2017), Hrvaško (Šimunjak, Sinčić Čorić in Brečić, 2017), raziskave z več primeri pa so bile redke.

Pričujoča raziskava je želela zapolniti manko v literaturi z odgovorom na vprašanje, ali lahko Facebook strani političnih akterjev delujejo kot platforme vključevanja državljanov v spletne aktivnosti, povezane s politiko. Študija je vzela pod drobnogled, do katere mere lahko angažma državljanov, izražen z všečki, komentarji in delitvami, razložimo z zasebnimi in popularnimi lastnostmi, ki jih voditelji komunicirajo preko Facebook strani. To je tudi ena redkih raziskav, ki proučuje potencial teh lastnosti za spletni angažma.

Metodološko novost študije najdemo v kategorijah analize vsebine, s katerimi sem lahko razdelala različne vidike personalizacije in proučila potencial personalizacije pri vključevanju državljanov v politično komunikacijo. Poleg tega je študija v analizo vključila še vizualne elemente Facebook objav. Predhodne študije so se pretežno ukvarjale samo s tekstualnim delom objav, saj programi zbiranja spletnih podatkov po navadi ne morejo izluščiti vizualnih podatkov, predvsem ne tako obsežne količine vizualij, kot je bila analizirana v tukajšnji študiji. Vključitev vizualnih elementov objav mi je omogočila pregled vidnosti politikov in njihovih družinskih članov na fotografijah. Vizualni material je prav tako prispeval k analiziranju

emocionalne privlačnosti, saj ta ponekod ni bila eksplicitna v tekstu, hkrati pa je bila lahko manj eksplicitno prisotna v spremljajoči podobi.

Omejitve raziskave

Prva omejitev, ki jo bi rada poudarila, je vzorec držav. Čeprav je izbor držav novost projekta, bi vključitev še več držav v analizo projekt obogatila.

Drugič: ker sem analizirala samo Facebook in ne tudi drugih družbenih omrežij, je to nekoliko omejilo moje interpretacije. To odpira vprašanje, ali so ugotovitve raziskave edinstvene samo za komunikacijo na Facebooku ali pa so bolj splošne indukcije vseeno mogoče. Nadaljnje študije bi morale vključevati še komunikacijo na Twitterju, Instagramu in drugih spletnih platformah.

Tretjič, personalizacija je v tej študiji vzeta kot dejstvo, tj. predpostavlja se, da personalizacija na proučevanih spletnih straneh obstaja, raziskujejo se le stopnje in značilnosti personalizacije. Kot pišeta Rahat in Kenig (2018), personalizacije ne bi smeli vzeti za dejstvo. V tem kontekstu bi bila smiselna primerjalna analiza personalizacije na spletnih straneh institucij, npr. Bele hiše, ki bi jo glede na karakteristike in stopnjo personalizacije primerjali z Obamovo stranjo, da bi ugotovili, ali morda tudi na strani Bele hiše najdemo značilnosti privatizacije in popularizacije, ali sta ti rezervirani za voditeljevo »zasebno« stran, tj. stran, ki nosi njegovo ime.

Ena od omejitev je povezana s pomanjkljivostmi programskih jezikov za luščenje podatkov. Večina programov za luščenje tekstov je spletnih in ne morejo izluščiti fotografij, ki so bile ključnega pomena za mojo študijo. Dodatna težava je bilo luščenje objav izpred nekaj let. Ko gremo nekaj dni, tednov ali mesecev nazaj, lahko pridobimo vse podatke; če se v preteklost pomaknemo za nekaj let, pa obstaja verjetnost, da ne bomo dobili dostopa do vseh podatkov, ki so bili v tistem času na spletu. Glede na število objav, ki sem jih uspela izluščiti, verjamem, da moj vzorec vsebuje izjemno veliko količino podatkov, a sem kljub temu prepričana, da nekaj objav manjka. Tretji problem zbiranja podatkov je njihovo arhiviranje. Zanj nisem našla primerne programa, kar je privedlo do vsaj 15 velikih wordovih dokumentih, v katere sem kopirala vse objave. Tovrstno arhiviranje podatkov zakomplicira sedanje in prihodnje analize.

Omejitve so se pokazale tudi pri kodiranju spremenljivke »emocionalna privlačnost«, ki je bila ena najpomembnejših vprašanj raziskave. Težko je bilo namreč ločiti pozitivne novice in

emocionalno nabite vsebine. To se je odražalo v pristranosti koderke, kar se je potrdilo skozi test zanesljivosti med preiskovalci (*intracoder reliability test*). Pristranska sem bila predvsem v primeru hrvaškega predsednika Iva Josipovića.

Prihodnje raziskovanje

Verjamem, da delo odpira mnoga vprašanja, ki bi jih bilo vredno raziskati v prihodnosti. Nadaljnje študije bi morale emocionalizacijo političnega komuniciranja proučiti podrobneje. Večina raziskav, ki so se doslej posvečale proučevanju emocij v spletni komunikaciji, je to storilo z analizo sentimenta z avtokodiranimi programi (Dang-Xuan in drugi, 2013; Himelboim in drugi, 2014). Z namenom nadaljnjega ugotavljanja vloge čustev v politični komunikaciji bi bilo smiselno uporabiti tudi kvalitativne metode, kot je denimo multimodalna diskurzivna analiza. Specifični fokus bi moral biti na vlogi, ki jo v emocionalizaciji spletne komunikacije igrajo vizualije.

Drugič: tema, vredna prihodnjega raziskovanja, je tudi vpliv političnih in/ali medijskih sistemov na personalizacijsko tezo. Glede na to, da je moja raziskava razkrila razlike v komunikaciji zasebnih, političnih in popularnih elementov, bi bilo smiselno z večjim vzorcem držav in primerov ugotavljati, ali politični in/ali medijski sistemi zares igrajo pomembno vlogo, ali pa so razlike v končni fazi odvisne od karakteristik posameznih kandidatov in volilnega konteksta.

Tretjič: zanimivo bi bilo primerjati komunikacijo na spletnih in tradicionalnih medijih v določenem časovnem obdobju. Primerjava bi nam mogoče ponudila odgovor na vprašanje, ali privatizacijo politike vodijo bolj mediji ali pa je to predvsem strategija, ki jo uporabljajo kandidati. Hkrati bi bilo zanimivo videti, kdo daje na agendo privatno življenje – tradicionalni mediji ali družbeni mediji.

Prav tako bi primerjava komunikacije na različnih platformah družbenih omrežij ponudila pomemben prispevek k raziskavi personalizacije. Zanimivo bi bilo raziskati, katera platforma je najbolj personalizirana in ali obstajajo razlike v izvajanju personalizacije na različnih platformah družbenih omrežij.

Nazadnje pa bi bilo treba natančneje preiskati plat uporabnikov, tj. angažma državljanov, tudi z uporabo kvalitativnih metod raziskovanja, kakršna je spletna oz digitalna etnografija. S spletnimi etnografijami bi lahko raziskali posamezne Facebook profile angažiranih spletnih uporabnikov, ki najpogosteje všečkajo, komentirajo in delijo vsebine Facebook strani izbranih politikov.